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ABSTRACT

Papers in this collection focus on diverse issues in literacy ranging from motivation to wordless books to professional development schools. Papers in the collection, and their authors, are as follows: "The New Literacy and Reading Workshop: How Comfortable Is Too Comfortable?" (Jeanne Henry); "Fostering Reading Motivation: Insights from Theory and Research" (Linda B. Gambrell and Rose Marie Codling); "Standards for the English Language Arts: Stylish but Stillborn" (Thomas Cloer, Jr.); "Skill Standards: Establishing a Framework for Basic Skills" (Eunice N. Askov); "Balanced Reading Programs: Exploring Their Essentials" (Mona W. Matthews; Jerry L. Johns; Victoria J. Risko; Marian Tonjes); "Wordless Books: Promise and Possibilities, A Genre Comes of Age" (Sarah Dowhower); "Reading Instruction in the Middle School Mathematics Classroom" (Chet H. Laine; Terry L. Bullock; Bob Drake); "The Relationship of Standardized Reading Scores to Children's Self-Perception as Readers" (Thomas Cloer, Jr. and Shana Y. Ross); "Perspectives on Schema and Reading Comprehension: Content or Formal Schema? What Promises?" (Samuel S. Myers); "The Making of a Researcher: A Self-Study of a Mentoring Relationship" (Josephine Peyton Young and Donna E. Alvermann); "Storytelling to Promote Emergent Literacy: Prospective Teachers' Storytelling Experiences and Expectations" (Reed Motley and Richard Telfer); "Reflecting Retelling: Perceptions of Preservice Teachers and Implications for Instruction" (Marie F. Doan Holbein and Jane Brady Matanzo); "Seeking Readers: Integrating Gay and Lesbian Texts into a Developmental Reading and Writing Course" (Michaeline Lane); "Empowering Teachers through a Professional Development School and Classroom Action Research" (Joyce C. Fine); "The Perils and Promises of One School/College Partnership" (Marilyn G. Eanet); "A Literacy-Focused Professional Development Academy" (Shannon W. Kossack and Joyce C. Fine); "Teacher Training and the Effects of Past Experience on Preservice Teacher's Concerns for the Role of the Internet in Planning and Instruction" (Anne L. Mallery and Jane F. Rudden); "World Wide

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Web: Proposals and Pilots for Connecting Schools to Authentic Commerce in Literature, Ideas, Humanitarianism, and the Free Market" (Anthony V. Manzo; Amy Barnhill; Andrew Lang; Ula C. Manzo); "The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age" (Wayne Otto; Rick Erickson; Ken Smith); and "Reaction to 'The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age'" (Eunice N. Askov). (NKA)

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AMERICAN READING FORUM

1997, VOLUME XVII

PROMISES, PROGRESS AND POSSIBILITIES: PERSPECTIVES OF LITERACY EDUCATION

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Yearbook of the American Reading Forum

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1997, VOLUME XVII

Editors

Kay Camperell and Bernard L. Hayes
Utah State University

Richard Telfer
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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Four copies of typewritten doublespaced manuscripts (approximately 5 to 20 pages) that follow current APA form should be submitted. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to Dr. Richard J. Telfer, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190.

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From The Editors

Volume XVII of the American Reading Forum Yearbook contains papers that have been recommended by the Editorial Advisory Board from those submitted by authors who presented at the 1996 Annual Conference. The conference theme was *Promises, Progress and Possibilities: Perspectives of Literacy Education*. Papers in this volume focus on diverse issues ranging from motivation to wordless books to professional development schools. With relief, but also with some grief, Bernie Hayes and I are turning over editorial responsibilities to Richard Telfer. We want to thank the membership for their support over the past nine years, and we wish Richard Telfer success.

American Reading Forum

Volume XVII, 1997

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The New Literacy and Reading Workshop: How Comfortable is Too Comfortable?

Jeanne Henry

Since 1990, I have organized my entry-level college developmental reading courses around the reading workshop approach designed by Nancie Atwell and described in her book, *In the Middle: Reading and Writing With Adolescents* (1987). I think I was the first college teacher to use Atwell's approach, but at any rate, I was the first to write about the incredible journey college students and I took into real reading, for real pleasure, and for real purposes that the workshop allows. The book is called *If Not Now: Developmental Readers in the College Classroom* (Henry, 1995).

We college reading teachers have been churning out well-intentioned shortcuts to improved reading, such as identifying main ideas, summary writing, SQ3R, and developing semantic organizers since the 1960s. Our goal was to get the underprepared college reader quickly up to speed. But during the period between 1985 and 1990, I had become disenchanted with these techniques. When they "worked," although I was never sure what that meant, I could see that students still were starting over with each new piece they read. The lack of transfer value was apparent. I also became increasingly convinced that these instructional approaches distorted reading and further distanced my students from whatever pleasure and purposes reading might hold for them. Yes, they got good grades in my class and complied with my assignments, but they were becoming even more entrenched as nonreaders.

By the end of the 1980s, I had become steadfast in my conviction that the only way for students to improve their reading was through reading. Since finding that perspective in a typical college reading textbook was about as likely as finding a doctor who would swear that smoking was good for me, I feared I would have to strike out alone to put that belief into practice. And the more pressing problem was how could I get my students to read when they hated reading and rated it right up there with, oh, I don't know, having to take a standardized test with a hangover? Moving a sleeper sofa up three flights of stairs? Seeing an ignorantly dogmatic, elitist colleague get tenure? Pick your poison. But then I discovered Atwell (1987). Her solution was simple. Let students explore reading on their own terms and for their own purposes so that they might discover what pleasures, if any, reading held for them. Why in the world hadn't I thought of that?

The critical feature of my Atwell-inspired reading workshop is that the choice of what to read is left entirely to the students themselves. And this is why my students, who have tumbled into class, some still edgy from New York traffic, and others, still somnolent, just having rolled out of bed in the residence halls (telltale pillow creases still embossed on their cheeks) are immersed in their books by the time I reach the classroom. They read all through class, except during my minilesson (well, some read through that too). They tell me about reading at home, through the noise and tumult of aggressively hyperactive suburban households, or in the close quarters of overpriced NYC apartments, or wrapped up in a blanket in their anonymous high-rise college dormitories. Sometimes I'll see one or two of my students at a time sitting around this fabulous Henry Moore sculpture outside of our classroom building. I see them there because that spot, along with a water garden on the south side of my office building, is where I go during the day to read.

I run into my students, say in the campus deli, and they launch into rapid-fire New York youthese: "Ohmigod, I'm telling you, this book was, like you know, the BEST! I was so relieved when the killer got caught before he killed the little girl. You gotta read it. D'ja gottanotha one by her? Sorry. I see you're having lunch there with your friend. G'head and eat. I'll see you in class." And they are gone. Thirty seconds later my Kentucky ears finally register and fully comprehend what has just been said to me. In *If Not Now*, I wrote about my experiences with reading workshop at an open admissions institution in Kentucky. It is gratifying to finally learn that a claim I made in the book—that workshop will work anywhere–is actually true. Although my students at Hofstra, a private, selective admissions, liberal arts institution, are more able readers than my Kentuckians were, they still

started the class hating to read. Their enthusiasm, once they discovered reading for themselves, has a different accent and syntax, but it is no less enthusiastic than one of my Kentuckian's proud proclamations that "I read right regular now." On average, my Hofstra students read 1800 pages each last semester. I can't think of any other college reading approach that accomplishes that kind of volume (and every page of it read willingly). Appendix A contains a list of the books my students read last fall, organized chronologically, by reader.

While no one has ever used the phrase "reading for reading's sake," to disparage what I want to accomplish with reading workshop, the term has been used to provide a concise, sound-byte, sort of summary of why I do what I do. But it's an oversimplification. Like Atwell, I see all this high volume pleasure reading as a means of helping students come to love reading, but like her, I also see it as a vehicle for modeling, encouraging, and identifying the kinds of literate behaviors that research tells us good readers employ. The students select the course content when they choose the books they will read, but as the expert, the teacher, I'm responsible for determining the course objectives, what I want students to accomplish beyond high-volume, fully engaged reading. Workshop is indeed a student-centered approach, but I think some have given it a very shallow reading in terms of its pedagogical goals. To address that misconception, I have included in Appendix B a description of the course objectives as I explain them to teachers to whom I am introducing the approach.

What I consider the other critical feature of reading workshop is the letters. Literary letters, Atwell (1987) calls them. Each student writes to me, about once a week, and I write back. Students also write to each other, selecting a different classmate to write to each week. In these letters I see how students make sense of what they read. They draw upon their knowledge of pop psychology, for example, speculating that all adult deviance stems from childhood abuse. Or they may see connections between their own lives and what they read. One of my current New York students drew riveting parallels between Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*, the story of a young man's decision to flee his family and live off the land in the Alaskan wilderness, and his own flight from a privileged Long Island life to wander for weeks in Manhattan with little money and even less street sense.

Students use their letters (and their reading) to try out their values, often ping-ponging back and forth about issues like capital punishment when they read a book like *Dead Man Walking*. At times, they become fixated on aspects of their books that might strike me as minor at best. In reading *Eight Bullets: One Woman's Story of Surviving Anti-Gay*

Violence, Elizabeth focused on a sentence in which it was reported that an EMT was so worried about starting treatment immediately that he did not take the time to put on rubber gloves before caring for a gay gunshot victim. She wrote pages in which she compared this to an emergency room observation done for another class in which she had seen doctors treat a woman with full-blown AIDS as if she were "dirt, like a disease instead of a person. They should be careful but did they have to hate her for being sick?"

What never fails to astonish me is the many purposes to which students put their reading. Never could I dream up all of these reasons for reading, not to mention developing a teacher-driven curriculum that could make them happen. Tina wrote that she exchanged books with her best friend from home, who had chosen another college, to stay connected, to have "something in common to talk about." Like many of my students, Eva used her new pleasure in reading to try to get her boyfriend to read more. She wrote:

> For the second year my goal is to read 5 hours a week. This is a promise my boyfriend and I made. We went to a bookstore and I told him he should buy *Red Dragon* because you said it was good (what you really said what that I'd like it but he doesn't have to know that). I bought *Sleepers* because I want to read the book before I see the movie. Right now he's on page 50 something. But as soon as we both finish the book we're going to switch. He likes Red Dragon and told me I would love it (what a surprise!).

My students have learned, and have taught me, that reading is a means of keeping in touch with friends, getting answers, a defense against loneliness, or a way of getting through tense moments like the long wait in an OB/GYN's office before she asks you to do things an intimate would never dream of suggesting, as Michelle wrote in a literary letter last fall semester:

> I just had my first pelvic. I was sweating bullets. I was sitting in the waiting room going crazy that everyone was staring at me. Is she knocked up? Has she got a VD? I thought I would throw up. So I got out my book to pretend to read so I wouldn't get looked at. Like when my cat thinks if she can't see me I can't see her. But then I got caught up in MHC [Mary Higgins Clark]. It passed the time but it didn't help when the nurse called my name though. Even MHC can't get you through a gyno.

Admittedly, reading does have limits as a panacea.

Having a reason to read is what keeps us reading. A test may get students to read. An assignment for reading class may get them to read. But coming to understand that reading answers questions, solves problems, and meets needs that others have not imposed upon them is a revelation to my students. And among the many blessings reading workshop bestows, I think it is this freedom to discover what reading can do for them that makes my students turn the page and to move forward as engaged, enthusiastic, and interested readers.

Having told you about the content of *If Not Now* and how reading workshop continues to develop at my new institution in New York, let me turn to the reaction the book has received. Almost immediately after publication I began to hear from teachers all over the country who were in various stages of readiness to adopt Atwell's workshop approach in their college reading classrooms. I am currently mentoring many of them, and encouraging them to mentor each other via the Internet. At the college level, reading workshop is now being used in ten states, including Texas, California, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Vermont. In the tenth state, Kentucky, workshop has become the norm for college developmental reading courses at both two- and four-year institutions. The published reviews of *If Not Now* have been affirming. One reviewer called the book "a significant addition to the literature on revolutionizing reading" (Daane, 1996, p. 237).

And so, now that reading workshop is reputable at the college level, it's time for me to start making trouble again, or at least jumping on the bandwagon of the trouble-makers John Willinsky (1990) has dubbed the "New Literacy." I'm not about to abandon workshop, whole language, or student-centered approaches to literacy learning, but I have found good cause to interrogate my work and to initiate the next round of inquiry into my beliefs and practices. One of those trouble-makers is Margaret J. Finders. In her book, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (1997), Finders discusses how whole-language teachers, and others who embrace student-centered approaches, see themselves as providing classrooms in which students feel comfortable exploring literacy. But after a year-long study of students in such a classroom, Finders saw little change in students' perspectives, risk-taking, or growth in their reading and writing. She then asks, "How much comfort is too much comfort?" (p. 119).

Alarm bells went off. Was my classroom a playpen of teacherly indulgence? Think about it. Why should my students risk reading a difficult book when "Teacher" is just as gushing and enthusiastic when they finish a Mary Higgins Clark novel? Why not go ahead and say the

first reactionary thing that comes to your head in a literary letter, when Teacher's reply will be just as breathless, encouraging, and attentive even if she is, on some level, deeply offended by what you have written? I have listened to students canonize Rush Limbaugh and his hate-mongering, enthusiastically quote Howard Stern's homophobic humor, and attest to the veracity of Fitzgerald's anti-semitism in *The Great Gatsby*. I see much more compassion than I do contempt for humanity in my students, but I do get a glimpse of the heart of darkness from time to time. My tendency simply has been to ignore what I didn't want to see, for fear of shooting down my students' newfound love of reading if I took aim at what I considered despicable sentiments.

When it comes to getting my non-readers to read, I put the reading principle far above any other principle. Some of my students read books in which women are tortured for entertainment, African-American characters are limited to the roles of rapist, pimp, or dealer, and other books in which women are dormant and depressed until "Mr. Right" comes along to give life meaning. But you would never hear a word of criticism out of me. Here's how I rationalized my stance in *If Not Now*:

> Pat O'Reilly, one of my dissertation committee members, asked me during my defense how I managed to rein in my own reaction to some of the books my students read. A good question. My answer is that I have situational integrity. In the women's studies course I teach, I serve up moral indignation baked, broiled, and fried about the way violence against women is portrayed as entertaining in the media. But in reading workshop, I am just grateful my students will read. My principles shift when my priorities do. I have celebrated buckets full of blood and super jumbo body counts with the best of them. (Henry, 1995, p. 55)

Then, as now, I am reluctant to problematize a book my students are happily reading for the sake of any principle not related to the fact that they are reading willingly, especially when these are my principles and not theirs. My justification has always been that my students are vulnerable because they are new readers. If I challenge their books too assertively, I fear that they will once again withdraw from the world of reading and readers, back into what is for them the most comfortable of all places: aliteracy. How comfortable is too comfortable? Well the option of not reading is very comfortable for my students. It has worked for them, more or less, for 18 years, and it is a familiar means of coping with a literate world that calls what they are willing to read "trash."

In my opinion, calling a book trash is a breath away from calling its reader trash. So even when my students have read, they haven't been legitimized. They not only hate to read, their relationship with reading is filled with resentment, disappointment, frustration, and failure. I must never forget that when I ask students to give reading another chance, I am asking them to revisit a place filled with self-doubt, distrust, and sometimes rage. To compare it, imagine proposing to a woman who was battered by her first two husbands and trying to persuade her that this time it will be different. Imagine the gentleness, patience, and unconditional approval you would want to convey in that circumstance.

My students have been battered and, in fact, continue to be. These underprepared students are demonized throughout much of the current writing about higher education, blamed for everything from low faculty morale to the decline of Western civilization. If I am overly protective of my students, if I err toward comfort rather than challenge, and I admit that I do, well, I do come by it righteously. And even though Margaret Finders might be the first to say that the girls she studied, average learners, were unlike my own at-risk students, I still suspect she or anyone would urge me to respond intelligently, despite my students' fragility, to comments like the one I read in a letter today. Melissa wrote: "The book I started has a lot of gay characters and so I'm going to hate it. I'm a Christian and so I know right from wrong. I follow the Bible and so I don't hold with homosexuality."

Where to begin? Where would you begin? I could get logical and point out that Melissa's syllogism–I am a Christian; Christians hate homos; therefore I hate homos–is flawed in that not all Christians hate homosexuals, and some homosexuals are Christians. But coming at it from an intellectual distance doesn't ring true for me. So how about I tackle another troubling aspect of her remark by pointing out that lots of Jewish people (like me) know right from wrong too, as do Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Wiccans, to name a few. Well, that doesn't get at the issue of intra-faith dissent regarding the subject of homosexuality. I could write that, as much as it pains me, many Jews are homophobic too; Christians don't have a monopoly on intolerance, but then that wouldn't go over so well either. Thirty minutes and five drafts later, I finally wrote to Melissa about the book I was reading and ignored the content of her letter. Coward!

As if all this weren't enough, while doing some random reading, I once again came across a passage by one of the biggest troublemakers of all time, Michael Apple. Within five pages of Apple's introduction to the John Willinsky's *The New Literacy* (1990), I found the question of

"how much comfort is too much comfort?" staring me in the face again. Apple wrote:

> Yet what if self-directed reading leads to a "self" we don't like? What if many girls choose only to read adolescent romance novels with their visions of women as only finding fulfillment in romance and their gender, race, and class stereotypes? How do we cope with the politics of pleasure (after all some girls may choose these books) and what might be called the politics of emancipation (aren't we supposed to take them beyond such stereotypes)? (Apple, 1990, p. xiii).

As a reading teacher, I want my students to find whatever pleasures reading might hold for them. But I also want them to read with an understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts in which books get written and read; yet, as Finders (1997) asks, "how can one expect a critical stance when there is no suggestion of any alternative readings?" (p. 127). It is not my business to convince students to embrace feminism, since that is the example at hand, but I do feel an obligation to let them know that other perspectives are out there. But before I return to this theme, I want to detour just a moment to upset the "Applecart."

Many students enjoy the escapist aspects of teen romances, or horror stories, to name a couple of popular Gen X genres, without buying into them. Let's look at the question from another point of view. Mattel provided millions of little girls with a doll called Barbie. Many have demonized Barbie, saying that she teaches anorexia and dumb-blondedness. But as Barbie "biographer" M. G. Lord (1994) points out, Mattel may have a plan for how little girls play with Barbie, but little girls have their own ideas. Lord cross-dressed her Ken doll as a child. I was into gender-bending of a different sort: I dressed my Barbie in G. I. Joe clothes and made her into a female action figure. Other little girls I knew joined with their brothers in putting Barbie and G. I. Joe into either his Jeep or her Corvette, attaching dozens of firecrackers, and then, with a stolen kitchen match, blowing both archetypes to kingdom come. Just as we cannot assume children will play with toys the way they are "intended," we can't assume our students will read a book from the point of view of the publisher's target audience. Since it is my practice to ask students what their books mean to them, I have been privy to a number of surprises.

But back to the dilemma: How do I show my students–those who do subscribe to racism, classism, or sexism of the books to which they

are drawn–alternative reactions or understandings of the books they read without so problematizing the book that students no longer enjoy it? How do I avoid subjecting them to the same judgments they have experienced in the past as readers? How can I get my students out of their comfort zones, or raise uncomfortable questions about their books without leaving them feeling betrayed? "Read whatever you want, as long as you read," I tell them. Should I then add an aside saying, "and be prepared for me to then imply just how simple-minded, or bigoted, or primitive I think you are for liking what you like?"

For now, I have more questions than answers. But I have chosen to take, and to study, a cautious approach. I have decided to let reading do the work, to let good books confront the issues. I will use reading itself to generate more critical readings. I believe in reading, and readers, and so I will let them do their work. Instead of telling my students that I think Rush Limbaugh is simply a commercial enterprise, a vehicle for profiting on white males' most reactionary fears, I will flow with their interest in the whitest of privileged white men and recommend that they read and rebuke *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot* in order to inflict an alternative point of view. To those who enjoy horror and suspense novels in which women are mutilated and degraded for entertainment, I will recommend Joy Fielding's *See Jane Run*, or Nancy Price's *Sleeping With the Enemy*, or Stephen King's *Dolores Claiborne* or *Rose Madder*, all of which are irresistible thrillers in which victimized women summon the strength to confront and to outwit their villains. I will suggest my teen romance fans read Maeve Binchey's *Circle of Friends* or Wally Lamb's *She's Come Undone* as an alternative means of meeting their need to devour books about teen love and teen experience. I might suggest my racist male students read *Hoop Dreams*, since they unconsciously suspend some degree of their racism when the topic is sports and this book speaks to the exploitation of African American athletes. And for my female students who see African Americans as inferior, I might suggest a book few women, like them, who are looking for suitable love but not willing to sell themselves short can fail to relate to, Terry McMillen's *Waiting to Exhale*.

I haven't read enough books to always have a recommendation, and I can't always get my students to read the books that I recommend, but using reading to produce critical readings is the best nonconfrontational plan I can come up with at this time. I'll keep everyone posted.

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Appendix A

Fall 1996 Titles

Rachel:
The Sacrifice of Tamar, Naomi Regan
Circle of Friends, Maeve Binchey
Light a Penny Candle, Maeve Binchey
Jepthe's Daughter, Naomi Regan
The Five Books of Miriam, Ellen Frankel

Julia:
Mama, Terry McMillen
How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Julia Alvarez
Paula, Isabel Allende
Waiting to Exhale, Terry McMillen
Like Water for Chocolate, Laura Esquivel

Marcus:
Sein Language, Jerry Seinfeld
Don't Stand Too Close to a Naked Man, Tim Allen
The Ghost and the Darkness, Dewey Gramm
In Defense of Mumia (poetry collection)
Makes Me Wanna Holler, Nathan McCall

Elizabeth:
Henry in Love, Marian Thurm
Communion, Whitley Streiber
Eight Bullets, Claudia Brenner and Hannah Ashley
Sleepers, Lorenzo Carcaterra
The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison
Dead Man Walking, Sister Helen Prejean
Eve's Tatoo, Emily Prager
Schindler's List, Thomas Kennealy

Aleksandr:
Outbreak, Robin Cook
Outbreak, Robert Tine
Carriers, Patrick Lynch
The Hot Zone, Richard Preston

Michelle:
Rudy, James Elison
School Ties, William Boyd
Silent Night, Mary Higgins Clark
A Stranger is Watching, Mary Higgins Clark
Not Without My Daughter, Betty Mamoody

Tina:
The Color Purple, Alice Walker
Turtle Moon, Alice Hoffman
Slow Waltz at Cedar Bend, Robert James Waller

Like Water for Chocolate, Laura Esquivel
The Ghost and the Darkness, Dewey Gramm
Sleepers, Lorenzo Carcaterra

Angie:
The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald
Carriers, Patrick Lynch
Sounder, William Howard Armstrong
All Around the Town, Mary Higgins Clark
Red Scream, Mary Willis Walker
Presumed Innocent, Scott Turow
Waiting to Exhale, Terry McMillen
Silent Night, Mary Higgins Clark
Relic, Douglas J. Preston

Eva:
Rose Madder, Stephen King
Second Child, John Saul
Dirty White Boys, Stephen Hunter
Gerald's Game, Stephen King
Sleepers, Lorenzo Carcaterra
Delores Claiborne, Stephen King

Jesus:
Die Hard, Screenplay by Roderick Thorpe
Last Man Standing, Screenplay by Walter Hill
Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton
The Lost World, Michael Crichton

Patty:
All Around the Town, Mary Higgins Clark
Let Me Call you Sweetheart, Mary Higgins Clark
Melody, V. C. Andrews
Vanished, Danielle Steel
Accident, Danielle Steel
Ellen Foster, Kaye Gibbons
See Jane Run, Joy Fielding

Appendix B

Reading Workshop Objectives (for teachers)

What follows is an admittedly partial and evolving list of reading behaviors workshop teachers could be monitoring, modeling, and encouraging as they work with students in class and respond to their literary letters.

Please remember, you will lose your ever-loving minds if you attempt to "teach" the items on this list. Instead, look for opportunities. If Jose says he saw the movie after reading the book, ask him to compare the two. If Maria Teresa reports that she has read two books by the same author, ask her to compare them. If Tim wants to know more about a subject, give him some ideas for where to look and encourage him to follow through. If a student makes the connection between book events and her life experiences, make note of it. You might want to use this to help you pose questions in your literary letters to students. Or, if you're feeling ambitious, you might use this list as a starting point for developing either a pre/post inventory or a self-evaluation tool for students, or how about a teacher research project?

Reading Process

Does the student discuss his or her:

- strengths as a reader
- weaknesses as a reader
- environmental reading preferences
- social reading preferences
- physical reading preferences
- lifelong development as a reader
- short-term goals as a reader
- long-term goals as a reader
- genre/author preferences
- pleasure/displeasure with a book

Writing About Reading

Can the student:

- provide a coherent plot synopsis
- anticipate reader's informational needs in literary letters
- recommend books effectively to other readers
- express and explain a personal evaluation of a book

Meaning Making

Does the student:
- make connections between texts (intertextuality)
- compare books to their film counterparts
- make connections between book events and personal experience
- make connections between book events and world events
- go "beyond text" to speculate about characters' motives, influences
- go "beyond text" to speculate about authors' motives, influences
- differentiate between understanding a text and not
- identifying personal beliefs that influence his or her meaning-making
- generate visual imagery from text

Affective Elements of Reading

Does the student discuss or exhibit:
- emotional responses to text
- emotional responses to the act of reading
- cognitive dissonance as a result of reading
- affirmation of cherished views as a result of reading
- changes in attitude toward reading
- pride in reading accomplishments
- positive/negative response to family/peer attitudes toward his or her reading
- feelings of competence and/or control (or lack of confidence/control)
- avoidance behaviors (choosing easy books, making little progress)

Strategic Reading

Does the student:
- ask questions while he or she reads
- monitor comprehension
- predict outcomes
- confirm or disconfirm predicted outcomes
- identify text difficulty
- adjust reading rate to text difficulty
- select appropriately difficult texts
- knowingly attempt to read increasingly difficult texts
- generate personal goals for reading improvement
- preview reading material (cover, blurb, etc.)
- inspect text (skimming, skipping ahead, rereading)

- continue "processing" text after reading session
- apply prior knowledge to meaning-making
- seek out further information about a text (either to sustain reading or to further pursue a topic)

Literate Behaviors

Has the student:

- selected enjoyable books with assistance from friends, family, teachers
- selected enjoyable books without assistance
- purchased or procured a book independently
- checked out book from campus/community library
- talked about books with family/friends
- read outside of class in "spare time"
- stayed up "too late" reading a good book
- gone to a reading and/or book signing
- used reading to answer personal/professional questions
- recommended books to others
- identified a favorite author
- identified a favorite genre (type of book)
- started keeping a "to read" list

'Student's names are pseudonyms and their work is used with their permission.

Fostering Reading Motivation: Insights From Theory and Research

Linda B. Gambrell, Rose Marie Codling

Motivation has been widely researched by psychologists and educators in an attempt to understand this complex phenomenon. Although motivation has been studied extensively, there has been limited attention given to the role of motivation in reading development. Motivating students to read, however, is a practical concern and demanding task for classroom teachers and parents (O'Flahaven, Gambrell, Guthrie, Stahl, & Alvermann, 1992; Spiegel, 1981; United States Department of Education, 1986).

Research supports the notion that the depth and breadth of literacy learning are influenced by a variety of motivational factors (Ford, 1992; McCombs, 1991; Oldfather, 1993). Currently there is great interest in exploring factors that are specifically associated with reading motivation so that we can create rewarding contexts for literacy learning. In this article, we discuss what theory and research suggest about the role of motivation in reading development. First, we discuss the role of motivation in theories of learning. We then briefly review several major lines of research that have particular relevance for reading educators. Finally, we present theory and research-based suggestions for creating classroom climates that support and nurture students' motivation to read.

What is the Role of Motivation in Theories of Learning?

This discussion of motivation begins with a general focus on learning because learning and motivation are so closely intertwined in the literature. As Weiner (1990) noted:

> The study of motivation for the educational researcher thus has been confounded with the field of learning; indeed, motivation often is inferred from learning, and learning usually is the indicator of motivation for the educational psychologist. This lack of separation, or confounding, between motivation and learning has vexed those interested in motivational processes in education, in part because learning is influenced by a multiplicity of factors including native intelligence. (p. 618)

For decades, researchers have been interested in human behavior and have devoted attention to the study of human motivation. During this time there have been major shifts in our thinking about what motivates people to act as they do (Nisan, 1985). The earliest theories of motivation centered round "psychological hedonism" (Berlyne, 1971). This theory posits that an individual is motivated to act if the consequences seem pleasant and is unmotivated if the consequences are perceived as unpleasant. Although this theory accounted for much human behavior, it failed to explain an individual's response in a situation which was completely unfamiliar. In other words, how would a person be expected to act if the consequences were unclear or unknown? The hedonic line of thought also fell short in explaining why people sometimes act in ways that produce unpleasant or even dangerous circumstances, such as putting oneself in peril to rescue another individual.

Researchers later began to focus on the role of instinct in behavior. Research on instinct often focused on nonhuman organisms and their relative activity levels, states of arousal, and attempts to alleviate disequilibrium (Weiner, 1990). For instance, researchers examined rats deprived of a need, thus restoring a state of balance or equilibrium. When humans were considered, theories of instinct did not account for the role of learning in their actions. It soon became clear that the complexities of human behavior could not be explained by instinct theory alone.

Behaviorists, on the other hand, viewed learning strictly in terms of an individual's response to external stimuli (Berlyne, 1971; Phillips & Soltis, 1991). They believed that what happens between the stimulus and response is not observable and, therefore, not within the realm of science. Learning, in their view, takes place as we become conditioned to certain stimuli. Classical conditioning ensues when a natural stimulus is linked with a response (such as a dog salivating at the sight of food). When another stimulus is substituted for the natural one (the sound of a bell for the sight of food), the response (salivation) will begin to occur as a result of the new, conditioned stimulus. Operant conditioning differs in that immediate reinforcement or reward will

encourage any response to any stimuli. This notion has more far-reaching implications than classical conditioning. In either type of conditioning, motivation is seen in terms of reinforcement. That is, individuals are motivated to act depending on how the behavior or task has been rewarded or punished previously. An obvious flaw in this theory is that it fails to explain an individual's response in a novel situation or one involving new information for which reinforcers are absent.

Like behaviorists, social learning theorists emphasized the importance of reinforcers in shaping behavior. Though related to the behaviorist line of thought, social learning theorists gave much credence to the role of experience (actual and vicarious) and imitation (Thomas, 1985). They sought to analyze the social aspects of learning, incorporating the influence of our own past experiences and those of others we have observed. Bandura (1989), one of the most prominent social learning theorists, also placed great emphasis on self-efficacy. He believed that our own feelings of competence also largely influence our decisions to act or seek a goal. The idea of social factors influencing human motivation surfaced repeatedly in various theories of learning over the next several years.

Later theories shifted the focus from instinctual or reinforced behavior patterns to additional factors that closely influenced human nature. Issues involving basic physiological concerns such as life, death, and pain avoidance were seen as driving behavior (Day, 1985). The basic premise behind these theories was that when an individual felt that a need wasn't being satisfied, he or she would be driven to satisfy that need. Hence, the theories came to be known as drive-reduction theories.

Soon, theories incorporated explanations for behavior in terms of basic needs such as hunger and shelter (Woodfolk, 1990). Maslow (1962), for example, described a hierarchy of needs that human beings experience. The most basic needs are those of survival and safety. Further up the hierarchy, Maslow discussed needs for belonging and self-esteem. These four needs he called deficiency-needs; when those needs are not satisfied, we become motivated to fulfill them. The three highest needs in this hierarchy, intellectual achievement, aesthetic appreciation, and self-actualization, Maslow called growth-needs. These are more concerned with personal fulfillment and, once met, we tend to continue our motivation toward further self-fulfillment.

The commonality in humanistic theories is the focus on basic human needs. These theories, however, did not address situational considerations which sometimes alter an individual's focus. That is,

people move up and down in a hierarchy of need, and occasionally they lower more basic need fulfillment in order to supplant a higher need. Humanistic theories also fall short in explaining unique individual reactions.

More recently, theorists have focused on cognitively based theories to explain complex human behavior more fully. Cognitive theorists are concerned with issues that are difficult to observe, such as perception, memory, and attention (Phillips & Soltis, 1991; Resnick, 1983; Thomas, 1985). In contrast to behaviorists, they believe that observable behaviors are not simply responses to external stimuli. Rather, these behaviors represent active mental structuring and organization of knowledge. Cognitive theorists do not view motivation solely in terms of how past reinforcement affects behavior or how an action might "feel" to an individual. Instead they see motivation as a process of thoughts and decision making. In their view, people actively make choices, attend to salient factors in their environment, and organize information in an effort to understand or to seek a goal.

Social and cognitive theories of learning and motivation seem to have the greatest potential for application to educational settings. These theories do not discard basic biological traits and instincts or environmental reinforcers as motivational forces. They do, however, expand on these theories by accounting for a myriad of factors that can influence an individual's behavior.

What Contributions Have Learning Theories Made to Our Understanding About Creating Motivating Classroom Contexts for Literacy Learning?

Theorists and researchers have posited a vast number of ideas in their attempts to explain human motivation. Although they come from different perspectives and disciplines, their ideas are not necessarily incongruent: Many are useful for informing a theory of motivation related to learning in general and reading in particular. The issues of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, value-expectancy theory, and goal orientation provide relevant insights for education.

Intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. Motivation theorists frequently make a distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to forces that are external to an individual which influence their inclination to engage in a behavior. For instance, offering students a piece of candy for behaving appropriately in a classroom setting is an example of extrinsic motivation. Behavior that is motivated by internal needs or feelings is considered intrinsic. A child who behaved appropriately in a classroom setting because doing

so provided him or her with a sense of pride would be said to be intrinsically motivated. The concept of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation is very broad and can be applied to many aspects of behavior. Additionally, an individual's perception of the intrinsic or extrinsic value of a task is a factor in motivation.

Intrinsic motivation appears to be based on two components, both of which seem important to an individual's engagement in an activity (Spaulding, 1992). The first component, competence, involves an individual's knowledge that he or she is capable of the task at hand. The second component, self-determination, is the ingredient which makes the individual feel as if he or she has some degree of control over the task.

Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991) have conducted numerous studies on motivation and developed a theory which they call self-determination. Self-determination theory expands on the concept of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Deci and his colleagues posit that motivated actions are "self-determined to the extent that they are engaged in wholly volitionally and endorsed by one's sense of self...whereas actions are controlled if they are compelled by some interpersonal or intrapsychic force" (Deci, et al., 1991, p. 326-327).

Deci and his colleagues found that individuals who are self-determined display greater conceptual learning and better memory at both elementary and college levels. In addition, they report that when children were informed that learning text material would help them on an upcoming test they did more poorly than students who were not told about the test. Students who were self-determined and intrinsically motivated had higher achievement, and they reported more positive classroom attitudes and enjoyment of school work than extrinsically motivated students.

The premise behind self-determination theory is that self-determined learning is a desirable goal that supports three inherent human needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Competence refers to an individual's feelings of capability for accomplishing a task. Relatedness is the development of relationships with others in the social context in which an activity occurs. The ability to initiate actions and regulate those actions independently is called autonomy.

The findings of Deci et al. (1991) indicate that a social context which enhances opportunities for meeting the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy will foster self-determination. They suggest that

general motivation might be increased by attending to any of the factors in isolation. However, in order to develop intrinsic motivation, it is critical that all three elements be addressed--especially autonomy. A social context which is seen as encouraging choice and responsibility as opposed to control is more "autonomy supportive" and is essential for the development of intrinsic motivation.

Studies on the use of external incentives have had interesting and diverse results (Myers, 1986). It appears that when external rewards are offered for behaviors that are inherently motivating to begin with, individuals tend to cease engaging in the activity once the rewards are removed. On the other hand, if the activity is not inherently interesting to an individual, extrinsic rewards can have a positive effect on encouraging or eliciting the desired behavior.

Some researchers posit that an individual's perception of a reward determines their reaction to it. If the reward is seen as controlling, it will sometimes be detrimental. However, if the reward is seen as providing useful information, it may be beneficial (Deci et al., 1991). Based on the results of this research, Myers (1986) suggests that to enhance intrinsic motivation we need to provide challenge and encourage creativity; to inform but not control.

Value-expectancy theory. Value-expectancy theory is comprised of two components (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Wigfield, 1994). The first component relates to the value an individual places on the outcome of a particular action. The second component, expectancy, relates to the individual's perception that he or she will achieve the desired outcome. These two components work together and are critical elements in motivation. A valued goal may not be attempted if the individual feels that the goal is not attainable for some reason (e.g., task difficulty). Conversely, a goal that is easily reached might be neglected if its value to the individual is perceived as minor or unimportant.

Value-expectancy is supported by a number of research studies which suggest that students who believe they are capable and competent readers are more likely to outperform those who do not hold such beliefs (Paris & Oka, 1986; Schunk, 1985). In addition, there is evidence which suggests that students who perceive reading as valuable and important and who also have personally relevant reasons for reading will read in a more planful and effortful way (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986; Paris & Oka, 1986).

Attribution theory is grounded in value-expectancy theory (Weiner, 1992). This theory goes a step further by attempting to explain causes

for an individual's response in a situation. Self-evaluations and explanations for success and failure determine decisions and future actions. Weiner posits that causality has three dimensions. Individuals respond to a given situation based on their past experiences and these three dimensions. Locus, the first dimension, refers to the origin of a cause as internal or external to an individual. Ability is an internal cause; fear of punishment is external. If an individual attributes success to an internal factor such as ability, he or she will be encouraged to attempt the task in the future. The second dimension of causality is stability. Causes which are stable do not change over time. Ability may be considered a stable cause of success but luck would not because it is subject to change. Control, the third component influencing attributions, concerns the individual's perception of how much control he or she has over the outcome and his or her own degree of responsibility for achieving it.

These three dimensions combine in rather complex ways to determine an individual's motivation to act. For example, if a person attributes a successful outcome to ability, this is an internal cause. However, for some people ability is stable and for others it is unstable. The determination of the cause as stable or unstable might affect the third dimension, control. For instance, if a person believes that ability is a stable factor and perceives that a failure is due to ability, that person will feel less control over similar outcomes in the future. If the person believes, however, that ability is subject to change, perhaps through education, he or she will view future similar outcomes with more optimism.

Performance goals versus learning goals. Dweck (1986) suggests that there are a number of cognitive variables that influence motivation and that the adoption of performance goals or learning goals influences motivation. Performance goals are adopted by an individual when emphasis is on evaluating the competence with which a task in achieved. Since the focus is on judging the individual's competence, this stance can be threatening. Individuals with this orientation tend to perceive ability and intelligence as fixed traits which lead to certain interpretations. For example, when a person with a performance goal fails to achieve a desired goal, he or she sees their innate ability as the cause of failure. The result may be a lowering of confidence and a tendency not to engage in similar future activities for fear of failure. Learning goals, on the other hand, are those in which emphasis is on content mastery. Dweck's work has demonstrated that individuals who adopt learning goals value learning for its own sake and tend to interpret failure in terms of the amount of effort that was expended rather than ability.

Ames and Archer (1988) found similar results. Students in their study were asked to respond to questions about whether their class was learning-goal or performance-goal-oriented. When students perceived their class as learning-goal-oriented, they reported using effective strategies for learning more often than students who perceived their class as performance-goal-oriented. The learning-goal-oriented students also attempted more challenging tasks and appeared to enjoy their classes more. These students also tended to attribute their success to the effort that they expended. These findings are similar to Nolen's (1988). Students in her study who were more task-oriented valued and utilized deeper processing strategies than students who were performance-oriented.

How Does Theory and Research Inform Literacy Instruction?

There are a number of important ways in which the above theory and research provide insights for educational practice.

Fostering the intrinsic desire to read. Results of current research suggest that there is much we can do to instill in students an intrinsic desire to read. Providing students with opportunities to be successful at challenging reading tasks and having control through choice are two ways teachers can foster intrinsic motivation. Feelings of competence are increased when students experience success at challenging tasks that require effort. Such experiences reinforce students' positive self-concept as readers and increases the likelihood that they will be intrinsically motivated to engage in subsequent reading tasks. Providing students with opportunities to be in control of their own learning also fosters intrinsic motivation. Letting students choose what they read and even when and where they read increases intrinsic motivation. Younger and less mature students can be supported in making good choices through the use of "bounded choice." The concept of bounded choice is a simple but very useful one. For readers who have difficulty choosing texts that are appropriate, the teacher might employ bounded choice by selecting several appropriate books and allowing the student to choose from among them. Another example would be to give several ways to complete an assignment and let students choose which task they complete.

Helping students learn to value reading. Value-expectancy theory has helped us understand the importance of two aspects of motivation: an individual's value system and expectations for success or failure. If we want to help our students learn to value reading, we must take a careful look at what the classroom context suggests about the value placed on literacy activities. For example, one teacher might say to a class who has had a pleasant and enjoyable recess time, "Class, you did such a nice job of playing together, I'm going to give you 10

extra minutes of recess time." This teacher is communicating that a high value is placed on recess. Another teacher might say, "Class, you did such a nice job of playing together, I'm going to let you read for 10 extra minutes during Sustained Silent Reading Time." This teacher is demonstrating that reading is valued and is to be celebrated. We need to think more carefully about how we communicate to our students that reading and literacy activities are worthwhile and enjoyable.

Value-expectancy theory also suggests the importance of self-perceptions about reading competence. We need to help students realize the critical link between effort and success. Helping students reexamine their attributions for success and failure may help them change negative perceptions of themselves as learners and readers. This may be especially important for students who have experienced repeated failure or developed negative attitudes about reading.

Create a classroom context that fosters motivation to read. The research by Deci et al. (1991) supports the need for an environment that is "autonomy supportive". This kind of support begins with teachers taking a student's frame of reference in order to understand the student's motivational and cognitive starting point as well as relating to the student in a way that encourages internal motivation for reading. Our own research has been focused on classroom contexts that promote reading motivation. This work (e.g., Gambrell, Codling, & Palmer 1996; Palmer et al., 1994) has demonstrated the value of using questionnaires and conversational interviews to identify useful insights about how children become active and engaged readers (see also Weisendanger & Bader, 1989). This line of research reveals that asking students about what does or does not motivate them to read can provide specific information that can be helpful in creating autonomy-supportive classroom contexts for literacy learning.

The findings from a large-scale motivational study we conducted with third and fifth grade students (Gambrell, 1995; Palmer, Codling & Gambrell, 1996) suggest that teachers help students develop the reading habit and an intrinsic desire to read. This observational and interview research (Gambrell, 1995; Oldfather, 1993; Turner, 1995) revealed three very basic considerations for creating motivating contexts by providing a book-rich classroom environment, opportunities for students to engage in self-selecting reading materials, and time for students to socially interact with peers about personally interesting books, stories, and texts.

In addition, motivational theory and research support the following suggestions for nurturing students' reading development:

- Create a classroom environment in which learning to read for its own sake is emphasized over performance and competition;
- Provide students with opportunities to develop competence in reading skills;
- Communicate as often as possible the value of reading for pleasure and information;
- Ascertain how students perceive classroom reading activities, tasks, and materials by asking the students themselves.

Concluding Remarks

There is abundant research to support the contention that motivation plays a major role in learning to read. We must do everything humanly possible to support and foster students in developing both the skill and the will to read. Although the practical suggestions for creating motivating contexts for literacy learning that have been drawn from motivational theory and research may appear to be basic, they are not always easy to implement in the classroom.

Clearly, motivation should be a central consideration in the reading curriculum because it often makes the difference between learning that is superficial and shallow and learning that is deep and internalized. It is also abundantly clear that more research is needed in this area so that we can understand more fully how individuals develop into active, engaged readers.

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Standards for the English Language Arts: Stylish but Stillborn

Thomas Cloer, Jr.

When the new *Standards for the English Language Arts* (NCTE/IRA, 1996) came off the press, I grabbed a copy with the excitement of a child at the state fairgrounds. I read and took copious notes. As I read and reflected on the substance or lack thereof, my state fair enthusiasm turned into something more like a child's reaction to a miniature carousel ride outside K-Mart.

After completing the book and putting the standards beside me on an old army cot while resting by the Cataloochee River in the Smoky Mountains, I imagined how helpful the standards might be for new teachers in the 21st century. Please keep in mind that the document clearly articulates why it is needed. The document declares it is necessary as the shared vision of what the nation's teacher educators (us) expect students to attain and what we can do to ensure that this vision is realized. All of you that have been in the trenches or that have visited in the schools will have schema related to the students' needs and levels of development that are presupposed by these standards. The young, inexperienced teacher that I thought about below has no such schema.

The setting is a rural South Carolina High School, Rattler's Nest High, that is located in an economically deprived and traditionally underfunded school district with 95% of the students qualifying for free lunch. Mrs. Puresen, queen of the teachers' lounge Mafia and chair of the English Language Arts Department at Rattler's Nest, is in her room introducing herself to little first-year teacher, Ms. Wren. In one

week the students will arrive, and little Ms. Wren is experiencing some degree of apprehension. Mrs. Hawk, a ten year veteran at Rattler's Nest High, is another character whose room is adjacent to Mrs. Puresen and Ms. Wren.

"Hi! I'm Mrs. Puresen, chair of English Language Arts and queen of the teachers lounge coffee Mafia here at Rattler's Nest High. Glad to have you, dearie, as part of our English Language Arts Department."

"Hello Mrs. Puresen; I'm Ms. Wren. I guess we'll be nesting next to each other this year. I'll probably be asking your advice on many different things."

"Did you get the new Standards for the English Language Arts I mailed you?" Ms. Puresen inquired.

"Surely did; I appreciate it. But I must say that I found the document less than what I had expected to see. I wonder if others experienced my disappointment."

Mrs. Puresen frowned, thought a moment, and then replied, "In what way were you disappointed dearie?"

"Well," Ms. Wren said while trying not in any way to be construed as belligerent or caustic, "I just hoped I was going to encounter the word 'instruction'. I thought the document was going to relate somehow to me and instruction, you know, good pedagogy," she said while sounding totally compliant.

Just then another teacher, Mrs. Hawk, stepped in. Mrs. Hawk had taught ten years at Rattler's Nest.

"Mrs. Hawk, meet Ms. Wren, the new teacher in our department. We're talking about the new content standards. What do you think of them?"

"You really want to know?" Mrs. Hawk smiled with raised eyebrows. 'I thought something was fishy when I read them."

"What do you mean fishy?" Mrs. Puresen asked without smiling.

"Well," replied Mrs. Hawk, "the 12 standards themselves are fine. No problem! But we all salivated at the very thought of having experts show us how we enact these standards in our schools. At one point the document sounds like something written by keynoters at a Democratic political convention when they talk about the vast gulf of differences in academic resources. Then, in a complete turn-around, they sound like 1994 congressional freshmen caught up in the Contract With America when they placed the entire burden

of these standards on the learner. I thought we were going to have some genuine instructional courage revealed when the document stated 'It has commonly been assumed that bright learners come by such knowledge naturally'. But instead, this task force of thousands came forth with this stylish but stillborn weanie of a document. I too, Ms. Wren, kept looking for something that would help me, a veteran teacher, know what was expected of me. If you look at it that way, you'll come away very disappointed and empty."

"Dearie, dearie, content standards present what students should know and be able to do; that will, in turn, surely have an effect on what teachers do. But to tell the truth dearies, I was so intent on looking for the word 'phonics' and so relieved that they never used that 'f' word that I sort of lost track of the document's purpose."

"They did use the term 'letter-sound correspondence'," Ms. Wren chirped.

"Yeah, but that's as close as they came; thank God!" Mrs. Puresen said with a ring of achievement and sense of triumph in her voice.

"What in the world are nonprint texts Mrs. Puresen?" Ms. Wren asked.

"TV programs and graphics on computers I guess," Ms. Puresen replied.

"Am I nonprint text?" Ms. Wren asked.

"Sort of, I guess," mumbled Ms. Puresen.

"How does knowing that help me teach the ones getting free breakfasts?" Mrs. Hawk squawked sarcastically.

"Well, both of you do believe that students should develop competencies that will prepare them for the literacy demands they will face throughout their lives, don't you?"

"Well yeah–but –"

"And you do believe that English Language Arts are important not only as subjects but as supporting skills for learning in all other subjects; don't you?"

"Well–of course–but–"

"Well, these professionals who developed the standards believe students can best develop language competencies through meaningful activities and settings involving nonprint texts, one of which involves television shows," Ms. Puresen stated pedantically.

"You mean watching Bevis and Butthead can be an enlightening and revolutionary life-changing experience?" Mrs. Hawk said vituperatively while laughing heartily.

Ms. Puresen didn't crack a grin. "Well," she continued while wiping the excess bright orange lipstick from the corners of her mouth, "the standards do focus on studying the structure of narrative in film, analyzing elements such as shot selection, framing, . . .

"Are they for real?" Mrs. Hawk asked while showing even less gaity?

"Yes! It's here on page 38," Ms. Wren said while pointing to the book and trying to defuse an awkward and explosive situation. "We must make students more adept and perceptive when viewing television."

"Good Grief!" cried Mrs. Hawk as she walked toward the door of her room on the opposite side of the hall. "Has it come to this?"

Ms. Puresen looked contemplatively outside the school to the barren fields that once served as cotton producers for the farmers of South Carolina with the courage to try. "Thank goodness they didn't mention phonics; they didn't use the 'f' word. That's the most important thing, and they knew it. At least something good came out of this gargantuan effort. Did you read the high school vignettes dearie? Surely you received some understanding from those about what might be expected of you?" Ms. Puresen asked with a little air of annoyance at little Ms. Wren's continuing presence at her desk.

"Yes, I did read all five, and you know what Ms. Puresen?"

"What dearie?"

"In all honesty, I sort of feel better realizing that the entire focus is on learning and not on our teaching."

"Say what dearie?"

"You look carefully at them, Ms. Puresen, and you will see in vignette one that the only thing the teacher does is ask students to perform, give assignments, . . ."

"Now wait dearie; the teacher in that vignette was required to bring an obituary from a certain era." "Oh yeah, bring an obituary. But, the teacher doesn't teach anything about an obituary, just brings it."

"That's right; the students must 'discover' things."

"You know, Ms. Puresen, I looked most carefully through each vignette to see if I could catch even a glimpse of something that might be meaningful to me, a first year teacher . . ."

"And?"

"Well, it was really weird. They talked about how the students would do this, and the students would do that . . . like a presentation involving a reconstructed television newscast, reenactment of a trip to a 1950s drive-in, and a family dinner with flashbacks . . . but not one single syllable which suggested that I would do something."

"Now remember, dearie, these are content standards."

"Yes, but how do you instruct in relation to standards without even a hint of instruction?"

"Now, I'm going to ask you little Ms. Wren," Ms. Puresen said while staring directly at Ms. Wren from over her tiny bifocal glasses. "If you had served with the group developing these standards, would you have dared to suggest to us chairs, veteran teachers of America, what we should be doing?" Ms. Puresen asked with a clear sense of authority in her voice.

"Guess not," Ms. Wren peeped in an almost obvious air of sycophancy.

Mrs. Hawk, sensing the awkwardness of the moment and wanting to inject her own bitterness, stepped back in the doorway. "I looked at all five high school vignettes and took very careful notes about the role of the teacher," she said. In the first vignette, the teacher gave an assignment to fill a trunk with letters. Students, with no mention of instruction, brainstorm the kind of letters an imaginary aunt might receive."

Ms. Wren then began again with a clear indication she was only agreeing and not being aggressive. "That was it! There was not one syllable further. In fact, it was interesting to note that the word teach, teacher, instructor, or instruction did not appear."

"What are you two talking about?" Ms. Puresen annoyingly remarked while flipping to the vignettes."

"That's right! Zippo! Zilch!" said Mrs. Hawk. "Students 'become interested' in reflecting on parallels and differences. Students 'open up' many conversations about the experiences. They're always putting together multimedia presentations. I guess if there is one safe word of advice today it would be this: When in doubt, have students put together a multimedia presenta-

tion," Mrs. Hawk guffawed and Ms. Wren smiled timidly while looking to see if Ms. Puresen smiled too.

"That takes more than we have here at Rattler's Next High," Mrs. Hawk continued, "no CD-ROM, no computer workstations, no video cameras, and no multimedia software. We're lucky if we have chalk; we shared textbooks last year."

Ms. Wren, gaining some confidence now, continued. "The teacher doesn't even lead discussion; the group making the presentation leads discussion."

Mrs. Hawk then continues, "In vignette three, a teacher actually appears, steps majestically forward and joins Sharon, the student, in analyzing a paper. I really was thrilled when I saw that a teacher was even mentioned. But all hopes of having a teacher say or do something vanished on the very next line when the teacher said, 'I can see by the writing-group evaluation sheets that the group gave lots of useful revision suggestions.' Then the teacher in the vignette began intense interrogation."

"Do you know how useful the revision suggestions will be from your students?" Mrs. Hawk asked worried Ms. Wren.

"No, not really," Ms. Wren replied sheepishly.

"You'll see next week."

Mrs. Hawk, knowing that Ms. Puresen had only looked for the "f" word and had not really studied the document, then applied the coup de grace. "In vignette five, the students again do the only teaching. They wander aimlessly about in a universe without meaning trying to make sense of a silly film version of the play Hamlet. Finally, they did what all good students will do in the 21st century."

"Multimedia presentations?" Ms. Wren asked.

"You got it! Make multimedia presentations to their instruction-starved classmates," Mrs. Hawk said while prodding Ms. Puresen for a reaction.

Ms. Wren pointed to the summary statement at the end of the vignettes. "I see in the summary that we are to closely observe students."

"Otis, the town drunk on Andy of Mayberry could do that!" snapped Mrs. Hawk.

"And to make judgments about how well students are learning in relation to the standards!" boomed back Ms. Puresen.

Little Ms. Wren dared not to respond except in an agreeable manner. "I guess," she twittered, "we are to reflect on students' development and guide them when they need help."

"Guide them how?" screeched Mrs. Hawk.

"By–asking–more–guiding–questions!" Ms. Puresen replied slowly, deliberately, loudly, and with a clear air of indignation.

"God help us!" cried Mrs. Hawk as she reentered her classroom with arms upraised.

• • • •

After imaging these things, I lay and thought about Mrs. McGhee, my supernatural high school English teacher in the high East Tennessee mountains. Mrs. McGhee taught me to love reading and writing by creating an enduring romance with literature and creative writing. The romance led to much precision later, precision made palatable only by the romance (Whitehead, 1929). If I had been 30 years older and 200 pounds heavier (she was a huge woman), I would have married her. She was the epitome of what I believe a validator, inviter, and teacher should strive to be. She, the Michaelangelo of Stinking Creek, Tennessee, would take an old hillbilly ridge-runner like myself, an old rough piece of Appalachian granite, and she would chip away by building our confidence, modeling how to do an assignment, demonstrating how that literature affected her emotions, reading, explaining, showing, modeling . . . and doing it all with the friendliest of expectations. And then this sculptor, one day in May after the wild turkeys stopped gobbling and the ruffed grouse stopped mating, would reveal her finished product at high school commencement. And just like the street urchins around Michaelangelo, the other teachers who were searching for standards would ask, "How did you know he, that finished product, was in there in that old rough unshaped granite?"

Mrs. McGhee modeled to us what we needed to know. She modeled cognitive strategies and affective responses. She would cry and we would cry; she would guffaw and so would we. She understood when to release responsibility to the learner, but she knew, more importantly, when she needed to teach, to instruct.

As I read and reflected on the standards, I felt grateful indeed to have been born and reared in the sawmill camps of Appalachia–and to have been educated by someone who knew the difference between creating talent and selecting talent. I have gone through periods in my life when I worried about the lack of sophistication of my own education. I really felt better after reading these standards, the same way the comedian Jeff Foxworthy felt after worrying about the sophistication of his family and then visiting the state fair. Upon viewing the participants at the fair, Foxworthy exclaimed, "Hey! We're all right! Heck! We're O.K.! In fact, we're dearn near royalty!"

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Skill Standards: Establishing a Framework for Basic Skills

Eunice N. Askov

Skill standards are an attempt to define outcomes–what workers should know and be able to do. By defining the outcomes, educators can plan instruction so that it leads to the achievement of those outcomes. Skill standards also help students see what they need to know and be able to do as they participate in various levels of adult education programs. If certification is tied to accomplishment of skill standards, then students have portable skills that they can take anywhere in the country. Employers can set job expectations for new or advancing employees based on the skills standards certificates. Employees can plan their own training opportunities to ensure that they are acquiring necessary new skills.

The skill standards movement calls for the establishment of voluntary industry skill standards which will inform workers as well as companies about the skill requirements for various occupational clusters. The U.S. Departments of Education and Labor are currently funding industry associations and others to determine the skills needed to work in such industries as electronics and retail. Simultaneously, the Department of Labor is also supporting the revision of the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* through research with job incumbents and others to determine the skills needed for various occupations. All these efforts include the identification of basic skills needed for the workplace and grow out of the original Secretary's Commission on Achieving of National Skills (SCANS) effort which created a framework for workplace skills.

The Literacy Leader Fellowship research project at the National Institute for Literacy is also addressing this area. The audience for this report, which will be available from the National Institute for Literacy and entitled *Framework for Developing Skill Standards for Workplace Literacy* (Askov, 1996) is adult educators who are working, or plan to work, in workplace literacy or workforce preparation programs. During the fellowship period, extending from October 1994 through September 1995, for a total of 12 weeks, selected curricula created as part of the National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, were reviewed to determine the basic skills that are most frequently taught in various workplaces, especially those adopting high performance work patterns. Domains in which skill standards for workplace literacy need to be developed–especially for those basic skills needed for high performance work organizations–are identified; these domains have been anchored with examples from the NWLP curricula. Descriptions of the various efforts related to setting standards for basic skills in the workplace are also provided for practitioners who may not be aware of these ongoing efforts.

National Education Goals

Numerous reports issued during the 1980s testified to the rising skill needs in the workplace and the possibly declining literacy skills among the workforce. The creation of education goals is viewed as fundamental to establishing a coordinated educational system that is responsive to the needs of the workplace.

In 1989, the nation's governors and the President convened the Education Summit, which led to the adoption of six National Education Goals. In 1994, Congress adopted the six goals and added two more goals. The goal that is particularly relevant to adult literacy (Goal 6) is that by the year 2000: "Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (National Educational Goals Panel, 1994).

Next, the National Educational Goals Panel was established to monitor and report annual progress toward accomplishing the goals at the federal and state levels. The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994) established the Goals Panel as an independent federal agency and expanded its charge to include educational reform. The purpose is to help local communities set high expectations for all learners, build an accountability system to measure and report progress, and set performance checkpoints.

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) engaged in a joint effort with the National Education Goals Panel to arrive at a functional

definition of Goal 6 (adult literacy) that can guide the improvement of literacy services as well as the measurement of success. NIFL asked adult learners across the country to respond to the question: "What skills and knowledge do adults need to be literate, to complete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship?" The responses from 1500 adult learners were analyzed qualitatively; four purposes for literacy (see Chapter 3) were identified using the framework described in the report from the NIFL *Equipped for the Future: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Life-Long Learning* (Stein, 1995).

In a related effort, NIFL is also building state performance measurement, reporting, and improvement systems (National Institute for Literacy, 1995). The criteria for a state accountability system, in measuring results, not processes, is moving toward establishing a flexible framework for systemic reform that may involve the setting of standards.

To check on progress in attaining the adult literacy goal, the National Adult Literacy Survey or NALS (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993) was developed and administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The results indicated that nearly half of America's adult population scored in levels 1 and 2 of a 5-level scoring system, making their participation in the changing workplace problematic. Low NALS scores also correlated as expected with unemployment and dependence on welfare as well as with other personal and societal problems.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

The Secretary of Labor's Commission (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) included business, labor, government, and education representatives in an attempt to create a broad base for deciding the skills needed for jobs in the modern workplace. The Commission identified five broad skill domains (ability to use resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology) with three foundation areas (basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities). Specifically, the Commission was charged to identify the skills needed for employment, propose acceptable levels for those skills, suggest effective assessments for those skills, and develop a strategy for broad dissemination (Peterson, n.d.).

Although limited in scope by the resources available, the product of the job analysis research that ensued provided definitions of 37 skills and competencies thought to be necessary for entry-level jobs in the future. Furthermore, examples of job tasks to illustrate applications of these skills helped describe levels of proficiency needed for different

jobs as well as guide the development of assessment tools and instructional curricula. An example of how the SCANS skills have been used in curriculum development for the Tech Prep program (which emphasizes coordinated academic and vocational experiences in preparation for work) can be seen in *Toward Active Learning; Integrating the SCANS Skills into the Curriculum* (Crabbe, 1994).

The SCANS skills provided a prototype for the larger scale effort or revising the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* also funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The research effort also gave investigators an opportunity to pilot the methodology that was used in the later study.

Revision to the Dictionary to Occupational Titles: O*Net

The Occupational Information Network or O*NET (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995) is the result (still in draft form) of a long process of revision to the current Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) to make the system responsive to the skills that are needed for the modern workplace. The plan is for O*NET to provide the national framework or infrastructure needed to match workers' skills to restructuring workplaces and to training opportunities in the workplace, and future workers to education and training in preparation for the workplace. O*NET will provide electronic access to worker skill and job requirement information that has been scientifically gathered and verified.

Linking worker requirements and occupational requirements are "experience requirements" such as training and licensing. The draft O*NET model (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995) is displayed in Figure 1.

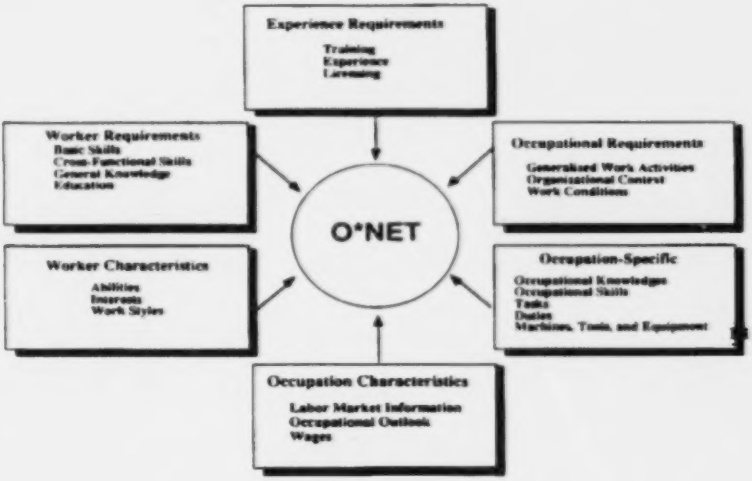
Workplace basic skills, such as reading and writing, are separated from the more general abilities, interests, and work styles, and are considered fundamental to all jobs to some degree. Cross-functional skills are more generic skills, such as information gathering and organizing, that occur across a wide variety of jobs. (The five broad skill domains of SCANS are similar to the cross-functional skills identified in the O*NET.)

The current DOT has such an occupation-specific focus that it is difficult to make cross-occupation comparisons or to consider board occupational clusters. O*NET, in contrast, will enable users to organize job-specific information into broad, related occupational clusters based on empirical data, making it possible for users to sort occupations based on skill requirements. Because descriptors will not be rigidly referenced to existing job titles (as in the DOT), they will help identify emerging jobs and occupational clusters.

In summary, O*NET (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995) will enable users to "(a) answer real world questions about matches between skills, job and educational requirements; (b) identify skills and education required for entering the workforce or transferring occupations; or (c) identify jobs available given particular combinations of skills and educational background" (p. 7). The skill standards movement can benefit from the O*NET database in specifying occupational requirements which can be linked to assessment, training opportunities, and perhaps certification. Current information about O*NET may be obtained electronically from the U.S. Department of Labor's homepage (http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet).

Figure 1

O*NET Draft Content Model



Organizations

Just as O*NET was an outgrowth of the recognized need for an overarching framework and common skills language, the skill standards projects reflect a similar need. Funded by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, 22 industry associations and organizations are analyzing their occupational clusters to determine the essential job tasks and the underlying knowledge, skills, and abilities that relate to

performing those tasks. The *Occupational Skill Standards Projects* (1994) provides a description of the 22 projects with a directory of contact people.

Wills (1993) describes the methodology being implemented with Department of Education funded projects and provides a good overview of the advantages of a competency-based system of skill standards that builds into the education and training curricula the workforce skill and knowledge requirements identified by industry. She envisions a framework for generating valid and reliable skill standards, assessments, and certifications that should also be benchmarked to international standards. She cautions that the appropriate role for education and training institutions is the delivery of services, not the development of the skill standards. Such development should be led by industry in order for the standards to be realistic and accepted by industry.

Problems have become evident as the 22 industry associations attempt to set skill standards for their occupations. Some occupations, such as customer service worker, cut across industry groups; how much specialized knowledge is needed of the industry in order to be a skilled customer service worker in electronics or retail, for example? Furthermore, there is great variability in the level of specificity of the skill standards, as well as different methodologies for determining the skill standards. Setting the performance levels required for entry-level or expert workers is also variable across industries; many of the skill standards projects have not yet reached the point of establishing levels of competence for the various jobs within the occupational cluster.

National Job Analysis Study

Also funded by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, the National Job Analysis Study or NJAS (American College Testing or ACT, 1994) is developing assessment measures of workforce competencies and skills needed for job success in high performance work organizations (HPWO). The result will be a scientifically determined set of general or core skills that every worker needs, regardless of occupation, at various job-tenure levels that are essential to working in the HPWO environment. The NJAS will provide a common language that will link generic and job-specific skills, resulting in "a definitive foundation on which to base assessments, work training programs, educational curricula, and comprehensive descriptions of job requirements" (p. 1).

Growing out of the SCANS effort, the NJAS includes construction of criterion-referenced assessments of the identified competencies and

skills, measuring whether or not workers have mastered a particular skill, rather than how well they do in relation to other people. ACT is working with several of the 22 projects that have been funded to develop voluntary industry standards.

The Training Technology Resource Center (TTRC) of the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, has an electronic *Skill Standards and Certification Reference Guide* found by selecting the Skill Standards option on the TTRC Main Menu. Menu options include General Information (about skill standards), National Skill Standards Board (including legislative background), Consultants Directory, Practices (industry, international, and state practices), Project Profiles (about the 22 voluntary industry projects), Research Topics (including annotated bibliographies), Organizations, and Products (developed by vendors). Technical assistance and further information may be obtained by telephone from (800) 488-0901 or (202) 219-5600.

Another source of information about skill standards is from the American Training Standards Institute (ATSI), a not-for-profit skills research corporation, with its STEPS (Skills Training Evaluation Procedures and Standards) initiative. Members of the corporation are from private industry, universities, research organizations, government agencies, associations, and concerned individuals. ATSI's mission is to enhance national economic competitiveness by establishing a skills language, an array of measurable skill assessment tools, skills-based training courses and certification, and a life-long learning process that will encourage workers to acquire new skills. The vision is to build a high-performance workforce using new skills standards and advanced telecommunications and computing technologies. Information on these skill standards efforts may be downloaded electronically from ATSI's homepage (http://steps.atsi.edu).

Conclusion

Skill standards define what a person should know and be able to do. Concerns about the quality of the workforce, both current and future, have led to the pressure to develop skill standards. The movement to develop standards comes from the sense that the world is changing rapidly and that our schools are somehow not keeping pace. Industry-based skill assessment and certification offer an attractive strategy for workforce development and an opportunity to create a system of occupational preparation. Skill standards create a "common language" and framework that communicate occupational requirements, including basic skills to current and future workers, companies and their training departments, and educational institutions (National Alliance of Business, 1995a).

The National Council on Education Standards and Testing (1992), in a report to the Congress, the Secretary of Education, the National Education Goals Panel, and the American people, recommended the adoption of high national education standards for all students and voluntary assessments that are linked to the standards. The report then recommended specific components for these standards that should be developed at the national and state levels.

While the business community is moving toward skill standards, it wants to move slowly in establishing a national system, especially one with government intervention (National Alliance of Business, 1995b). Businesses prefer voluntary standards that can help them learn from each other. They want to involve the educational community in the effort to develop skill standards. Educators need to become involved with these efforts when delivering literacy services that are tied to workplace education or workforce preparation. Educators who are involved in school-to-work programs need to know the basic skills that are required or assumed in the skill standards set by industry-led groups so that these skills can be taught in schools and reinforced in the workplace experiences. Although the long-term fate of the skill standards movement is not yet known, it does appear that national standards will have an influence on educational curriculum in the future. Educators need to be involved as much as possible in helping to set these standards and implement them in the schools.

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Balanced Reading Programs: Exploring Their Essentials

Mona W. Matthews, Jerry L. Johns, Victoria J. Risko, Marian Tonjes

One unabridged dictionary lists 25 definitions for the word balance. Balance can mean symmetry, equilibrium, or harmony. In literacy education, balance is used to describe a way to teach reading. Some proposed a balanced approach to teaching reading in response to those who offer methods at one end of the reading paradigm over methods placed at the opposite end of the paradigm. What concerns are prompted by the intense debates over reading approaches? What is balanced reading instruction? What core elements comprise a balanced reading program? What can teacher educators do to assist their students in designing, implementing, and evaluating balanced reading programs? In this paper, four teacher educators present their answers to these questions.

What Concerns are Prompted by the Intense Debates over Reading Approaches?

For decades there have been professional discussions about which method for teaching reading is the most effective. Currently, proponents of literature-based instruction champion the benefits of embedding reading instruction within the contexts of quality children's literature, while proponents of skills-based programs maintain that effective reading instruction contains a strong phonics component. Recently, the debates have intensified and often take on the tenor of a war. Perhaps this intensity exists because the opponents perceive the spoils as nothing less than the literacy development of the nation's children.

Our concerns about the divisiveness of the debates are fourfold. One, "they appear to reduce complex issues to either/or propositions" (Moorman, Blanton, & McLaughlin, 1994, p. 309). At a time when the instructional challenges facing educators require a broader, more inclusive perspective of how to develop effective readers, the debates imply that improvement will occur if the "best" method is implemented. Consequently, time which could be used in more productive ways (e.g., considering how to accelerate the learning of low-achieving readers) is spent espousing the benefits of one method over another.

Second, the debates divert attention from students. This concern was evident in the comments of 14 educators who participated in a discussion of balanced reading instruction in one of the author's graduate courses. For example, one teacher said, "There are so many people [politicians, parents, school administrators] battling over which is the best method, that sometimes the kids are getting hurt." Another teacher explained that the needs of children are better met when teachers have a broader instructional perspective. "You have to take some from every [method] and put it together to really make it work and to meet everybody's learning style."

Third, the debates erode confidence in classroom teachers. Although teachers are frequently not part of the dialogue, they are often at the center of the dispute. One of the 14 educators spoke of the whimsical way change is imposed on them and the negative impact this has on perceptions of their effectiveness. "You know a teacher has been teaching a certain way, and she thinks she's doing a good job and all of a sudden they say you can't teach that way, you have to do [it this way]. . . . There's something about somebody coming in and saying you're not doing a good job and you have to change your teaching." The teachers also stated that the public disputes over the best way to teach reading erodes trust in their ability. One teacher declared, "We need supportive administrators and county office people who are willing to treat teachers as professionals, [to] believe that we know what is best for children, and [to] trust us. . . ."

Fourth, the debates often lead to false overgeneralizations and the development of faulty labels that prevent us from studying problems in real depth. For example, while we know poverty conditions can affect students' literacy development and success in school (Chall & Curtis, 1991), we also know that many children in nonmainstream communities (described as "impoverished" by some) know a great deal about literacy but that this knowledge is not recognized within mainstream school settings (Heath, 1983). Too often, we identify a problem such as poverty and its effect on learning without taking the time to understand

the children from these settings and know more about how literacy happens within these communities.

We see a need to reduce or eliminate one-way thinking. Discussions which put forth one teaching method or grouping strategy over another tend to oversimplify the complexities affecting both learning and teaching. According to the teachers who voices are reported herein, the debates also erode perceptions of their own efficacy. Paradigm wars and the resulting dichotomous thinking about which method is best results in a myopic, narrow view of the task at hand. More importantly, they delimit teachers' efforts to provide instruction that meets the diverse needs of their students.

What is Balanced Reading Instruction?

Numerous definitions of balanced reading instruction exist in the literature. Strickland (1996) posed several elements of a balanced reading program. These include balancing a skills emphasis with a meaning emphasis, direct instruction with indirect instruction, content and process, trade books and textbooks, and informal classroom assessment and norm-referenced standardized tests.

Pearson (1996) wrote about the need to reclaim the center and described seven core characteristics of effective reading instruction. The seven components include looking for authenticity in all aspects of instruction, basing curriculum on positive and optimistic views of student potential, demonstrating and modeling literate behavior, scaffolding the learning environment for students, placing a premium on student control, building and respecting community, and looking for curricula connections to everyday life, etc.

As evidenced by these definitions, conceptions of reading have expanded over the past two decades. Reading once perceived as a perceptual task is now viewed by many as being far more complex (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). In keeping with this expanded conception, we propose that reading instruction should balance the affective, social, cultural, and cognitive domains of reading.

The affective domain is grounded in the belief that both children and teachers should have voice in what is taught, in what is celebrated, and in what is performed in the classroom. Having voice in what occurs within the reading program impacts readers' motivation and attitude toward reading which, in turn, impacts their interest in reading (Ruddell & Unrau, 1991). Related to this is the need for respect and belief in children's ability to make appropriate choices in their learning. And, because of the diversity among students, there is respect for multiple ways of knowing and using information.

The social domain is supported by the belief that learning is enhanced when students have opportunities to interact with others as they learn (Vygotsky, 1986). Higher cognitive processes, such as reading, are "formed in structures that are transmitted to the individual by others in speech, social interaction, and the processes of cooperative activity" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 29). Moreover, children who have opportunities to interact with others as they are involved in literacy events experience increased motivation (Fisher & Hiebert, 1990) and extended knowledge of the topic being explored (Wells, Chang, & Maher, 1990).

The cultural domain is grounded in the belief that literacy development is determined by students' cultural and linguistic history. Furthermore, our understanding of the influence of culture on learning requires us to understand that what constitutes "good literacy teaching" and "good literacy learning" in one setting may be very different in another. Literacy instruction, therefore, must build on the acknowledged "brilliance that students bring with them" (Delpit, 1995). Rather than following a monocultural view of instruction, teachers must listen to the stories of their students and the students' communities, help students make relevant their own skills and knowledge, and help students build on their experiences to display and develop literacy knowledge. This domain builds on the premise that all teaching and learning take place within a context, and to understand the processes of teaching and learning, we must understand the multiple variables that interact within the context–both in the school and in the community.

The cognitive domain is supported by several principles. First, skills and strategies can be taught and should be learned as means to solve problems (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1994). Second, students should be provided multiple opportunities to revisit concepts and to apply these concepts to new problems so understanding is enhanced. Third, opportunities for sustained thinking about complex information should be provided. Fourth, reading instruction should be situated in all subject areas.

What Core Elements Comprise a Balanced Reading Program?

As conceptions of reading have led to broader perspectives of what should be included during reading instruction, they have also led to broader expectations of what comprises a total reading program. Reading programs once confined to the instruction delivered during teacher-directed reading groups now extend throughout as well as beyond the school day. We identify and describe six components we maintain should be included if these expanded reading programs are to be balanced.

Goals, standards, benchmarks, and achievement targets should be articulated and used to guide the reading program: The outcomes that direct a reading program should be made explicit. Moreover, the learning experiences that enable students to acquire these goals at each grade should be identified. Then, how students' literacy learning continues across the grades should be illustrated. Furthermore, grade-level benchmarks and standards should not represent the minimum expectations for students. Remedial and narrowed expectations have led to decades of lessened expectations for many of the nation's children. Most importantly, we should articulate how all students are invited to participate in the school curriculum and how this curriculum is built on the language and experiences of the students as they acquire and enhance their literacy abilities.

To ensure a shared commitment and ownership in the delivery of the goals and outcomes within the classrooms, everyone in the school should be involved in their identification and development. Strategies should be designed to invite teachers, students, parents, and other community members to participate in setting the goals and expected learning outcomes. Such inclusion is vital if we expect the participants to acquire ownership and commitment toward meeting these goals. Additionally, incorporating a means for systematic reviews of the goals by the participants will ensure their refinement and viability, thus enhancing their effectiveness.

Learning experiences should be provided so learners can acquire knowledge about technology and mobilize their use of technology: The Atlanta Journal and Constitution (Kloer, 1996) reports that 40% of the population have home computers, more than tripling the 13% statistic a decade ago. There has been a 70% increase in on-line services to homes. The Washington Post (Bates, 1995) reports that the use of commercial computer services is up 85% and reaches 8.4 million homes nationally. The increasing prevalence and use of computers and other technologies warrants serious consideration of their place in a school's reading program.

Learners should have multiple opportunities to read and write: One distinguishing characteristic of homes from which early readers come (Durkin, 1966) and classrooms which develop motivated, engaged readers (Gambrell, Almasi, Xie, & Heland, 1995) is the multitude of books available to the children. Moreover, Piaget (1976) in his discussions of cognitive development maintains development occurs when children interact with the "object of knowledge." In the case of reading development, books are the predominant object of knowledge. Therefore, increasing the number of books in classrooms, schools,

communities, and home libraries and increasing the number of opportunities for children to interact with print are essential elements in a balanced reading program.

The children's interactions with text should also include multiple opportunities to write. Although the language of books and the language written by children share a common vocabulary, writing provides unique opportunities for children. Writing slows down the language process for children and thus provides them with opportunities to hypothesize, confirm, and expand their understanding of how language works (DeFord, 1986).

A variety of methods and approaches should be included: The first-grade studies (Bond & Dykstra, 1967) completed 30 years ago found that the variation between similar programs was often greater than the variation between different programs. Many programs were successful when implemented by a thoughtful teacher who was committed to that method. Because no one method can provide all the resources a teacher needs, a variety of methods should be included. Inclusion of teacher guided methods (e.g., Directed Reading Activity and Directed Reading-Thinking Activity), self-directed methods (e.g., sustained silent reading), and collaborative methods (e.g., partner reading, choral reading) are essential. Inclusion of minilessons that remind or direct students' attention to information and maxilessons that provide more intensive, deliberate, and intentional reading strategy instruction also are critical. And, opportunities for students to participate in intensive (close) and extensive (varied) reading of texts should be included.

Variety in the methods used increases the resources available to teachers, thus maximizing their ability to meet the needs of all of their students. Variety expands students' opportunities to practice their reading in different contexts and thereby expands the students' understanding of print. Moreover, variety adds vitality to a reading program, which increases children's and teachers' interests in the reading instruction and enhances engagement in the learning process.

Provisions for struggling, average, and advanced readers should be included in the reading program: Successful reading programs are designed to meet the needs of children at all achievement levels. For struggling readers, this means looking for ways to accelerate rather than remediate performance and to ensure that the instruction provided for struggling readers is of comparable quality to that provided their high-achieving peers (Allington, 1995).

Average and advanced readers should also be considered when developing a reading program. Currently, much of the discussion in the literacy literature pertains to the low-achieving reader. As laudable as this attention is, a balanced reading program is directed towards enhancing all children's reading.

High quality assessments should be included: Assessment of student learning serves a variety of purposes. Some assessments provide useful information to school systems and federal agencies (e.g., National Assessment of Educational Progress), but are not immediately related to the day-to-day instructional decisions a teacher must make. Other assessments are less formal but provide more relevant information for the classroom teacher (e.g., informal reading inventories). Explicating purposes which must be satisfied and identifying assessments which are necessary to achieve them will better ensure that instructional needs of all students are met.

What Can We, as Teacher Educators, do to Assist Our Students in Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating Balanced Reading Programs?

As teacher educators, we must reflect on our role in preparing teachers who can design, implement, and evaluate balanced reading programs. Perhaps we should rethink the methods we traditionally use to prepare teachers. Programs that present and describe theories and then leave students alone to make the transfer of these theories to practice need to be replaced. What is needed are programs that immerse teachers in sustained thinking and reflection about theory as they engage in the analysis of problems and issues that will confront them as teachers.

Successful models that assist teachers to gain the conceptual understandings of literacy development and instruction exist. For example, Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993), a program designed for first-grade children who are at risk of failing reading, relies on a long-term teacher preparation program. The initial program extends for one year and incorporates demonstration teaching and monitoring of the teachers as they work with children. When teachers complete their initial year of preparation, they continue to participate in teaching and reflection experiences that extend their development as Reading Recovery teachers.

Risko (1996) has reported success with using videodisc cases with preservice teachers. The prospective teachers view multiple demonstrations of classroom instruction. As they discuss multiple issues and problems embedded in these cases of classroom happenings, they are

encouraged to develop alternative ways to analyze and interpret teaching and learning events. These discussions provide opportunities for students to reflect and refine their own understanding of literacy instruction.

Concluding Comments

For decades reading professionals have debated and at times warred over which method is the best for teaching reading. Often, when the debates become paradigm wars, others (e.g., school administrators, school boards) who have influence over how reading is taught choose sides. Frequently, teachers are requested to alter their instruction to fit the chosen perspective. When the paradigm shifts again, a change in instruction often follows. Decisions about how to teach reading appear to be based on whimsy rather than substantive information. There is evidence of this in several states. Ten years ago, many teachers were told not to teach phonics because children would intuit these fundamental understandings of language via interactions with quality children's literature. Today, these same teachers are being told that they will include one hour of phonics instruction each day. Where is the balance in either proposal? What role have we, as reading professionals, played in this lack of balance? Perhaps our own lack of decorum during these debates leaves it to others outside the reading profession to ferret out the substance from the rhetoric.

We realize that the proposals we describe in this paper are part of a growing body of literature about what comprises a balanced reading program. Perhaps, if we as reading professionals continue to call for balance in the teaching of reading, then others outside the profession will work from a broader instructional pallet when decisions are made about how reading is taught. The beneficiaries will be the students in our elementary and secondary schools.

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Wordless Books: Promise and Possibilities, A Genre Come of Age

Sarah Dowhower

> Unlike words, even those fixed in a written text, visual images have an almost infinite capacity for verbal extension, because viewers must become their own narrators, changing the images into some form of internalized verbal expression. Accordingly, when artists arrange their images in a definite visual field, viewers are at greater liberty than listeners or readers to choose how and in what sequence to experience them. But they do not do so in complete freedom.
>
> . . . . Thus, visual narratives have to generate a point of view from the outside and somehow make it comprehensible to the viewer. The solutions to this problem mark the achievement of the artist-narrator . . . (Brilliant, 1984, p. 16).

Jason: (to his new kindergarten teacher after a trip to the library to get books to take home) I want to take this book back to the library because I can't read it. It doesn't have any of those "things" in it.

Teacher: You mean "words"?

Jason: Yeah, it doesn't have any words, just pictures.

Teacher: Jason, why don't you take it home anyway and make up your own words to go with the pictures? It is called The Spider by Julie Brinckloe.

Jason was referring to a type of book with pictures but an absence of written language to explain the pictures or tell the story. These books

are commonly called "wordless picture books". Other descriptors often used are "textless books", "books without words", "stories without words", and "illustration-only format books".

This paper explores the promise and possibilities of wordless books. The first part gives evidence to show that in the last few decades, by virtue of the hundreds of wordless books in numerous styles and formats, books without words have evolved into a well-established literary genre for all ages. A new scheme for broadening the definition of wordless books is proposed that reflects the increasing variety of types and the many possibilities of the genre.

The second part reviews the suggested benefits of wordless books and the existing research and argues that although many educators encourage the use of wordless books to facilitate reading, writing, and oral language, there is little research to support these practices. The paper concludes with a number of questions reading researchers have yet to answer about wordless books.

A Genre Come of Age

Stewig (1988) claims that the relatively recent appearance of wordless books is an antecedent of an ancient form of communication which our ancestors used to recount hunts, daily events, military incursions, and even Bible stories by using various media, including caves, tapestries, and stained-glass windows. Indeed, in Brilliant's (1984) studies of the ancient modes of communication through visual images in four forms of Etruscan and Roman art (urns, Pompeian walls, columns, and coffins carved in marble), he concluded that "in classical antiquity, given the early prevalence of illiteracy and the dominating role played by rhetoric among the educated classes, it is likely that visual signals were always an important, if subordinate, means of communication" (p. 15).

In recent history, these visual signals referred to by Brilliant (1984) have evolved into the unique art form of the printed wordless book. One of the earliest English titled wordless books for children may have been by Thomas Bewick, called *A New Year's Gift: For Little Masters and Misses*, first published in 1777 and re-issued in 1981. Another early textless book was *The Sad Tale of Bazouge* drawn from the *Tales of Sara* by Steinlen (1898) in Paris and re-issued in 1961.

In the United States, several sophisticated and unusual wordless novels were published in the 1920s and 1930s. Lynd Ward (1929) carved the distinct *God's Man* with over 120 wood-cuts telling a powerful fable of the selling of one's soul to the devil. In a lighter vein, Milt Gross (1930)

wrote and illustrated in pen and ink a classic silent novel of the 30s called *Hearts of Gold: The Great American Novel and Not a Word in It–No Music Too* (it was originally titled *He Done Her Wrong!*).

The first U. S. wordless book, specifically for children, appeared nearly 60 years ago and was entitled *What Whiskers Did* (1932) by Ruth Carroll. Carroll's wordless book remained virtually alone in the genre field until its 1960 reprint and the publication of Charlotte Steiner's (1961) *I am Andy: You-Tell-a-Story-Book* and Peter Wezel's (1964) *The Good Bird.* The late 1960s marked the earliest wordless book efforts of several prolific authors/illustrators including Mercer Mayer (1967), *A Boy, A Dog, and A Frog;* John Goodall, (1968), *The Adventures of Paddy Pork;* Eric Carl (1968), *1, 2, 3 to the Zoo;* Fernando Krahn (1968), *Journeys of Sebastian;* and Martha Alexander (1968), *Out! Out! Out!* Also, at this time, Carroll's (1968) second wordless book, *The Chimp and the Clown,* was published.

The last four decades have brought a flood of wordless books (or nearly wordless) for all ages. To date, close to 1000 titles (English) have been published.[1] As Table 1 shows, the 1960s brought the first wave of wordless books, with approximately 44 published. In the 1970s, the number increased sevenfold. The 1980s and beginning of the 1990s saw the creation of 60% of all wordless books published. Many of these appeared in sets published by major book companies in addition to individual author/illustrator's offerings. The publisher sets are a relatively new phenomenon, often accompanied by teacher guides, big books, and/or included at the readiness kindergarten level in basal reading series.

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[1]I have included books in the total that have a limited written text or contain a few words, defining these as wordless books because the illustrations carry the main message of the book. Examples would be Peter Sis' *Beach Ball,* (1990), Martin and Gammell's *Will's Mammoth,* (1989) or Rebecca Emberly's two books (1989) that have sounds rather than traditional words. Not included in the total are foreign titled wordless books in French, Italian, Spanish, and other languages. Many of these titles are duplicated in English. I have not included easy alphabet, number books, or concept books that include one or two words per page naming the picture, considering those picture books instead, because the concept is labeled with text.

Table 1

Wordless Books Published by Decade (N = 927)

	Decade Published				
	Before 1960	1960	1970	1980	1990
Number of Books	7	44	317	408	151
Percentage of Total	0.8	4.7	34.2	44	16.2

In addition to the large volume of wordless books published, the types of wordless books have expanded tremendously, giving readers/viewers a wide array of forms from which to choose. Most educators and librarians have been rather limited, however, in their definition of wordless books. Since the first appearance of articles advocating the use of wordless books in the mid-1970s, wordless books have been referred to consistently under the genre of "picture books" in which the story line is told entirely through illustrations (Cianciolo, 1973; Cullinan, 1989; Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988; Huck, Helper, Hickman, & Keifer, 1997; Norton, 1991). Basically then, wordless books have been defined only as books that tell a story with pictures. To further underscore the misconception that textless books are only narratives, the Library of Congress subject heading for wordless books is "stories without words." Ironically, many of the books catalogued under this title do not have stories in the conventional sense.

In truth, there is a wide variety of wordless books available in addition to narratives. These textless books run the gamut from a series of unrelated pictures to a set of illustrations that are thematically or sequentially linked or that give expository information. There is also another unique category that allows the reader/viewer to interact with the visual material in a game-like fashion.

Furthermore, textless books come in an array of formats and styles for every age. Fold-out books, cloth books, scrubbable books (vinyl-bubble books), accordion books, pop-up/movable parts books, board books, half- or split-page books, comic books, and big books are among the different formats available besides the conventional book form. In addition, the visual complexity and high inference level of many wordless books make them more suitable for adolescents and adults than young children. Examples of more sophisticated books for older

children and even adults are *Flood* (Drooker, 1992), *The Silver Pony* (Ward, 1973), *The Wonder Ring* (Wetherbee, 1978), *Anno's Journey* (Anno, 1977), *The Red Thread* (Nygren, 1987), *Adele's Album* (Ponti, 1986), and any of the Mariotti books (1980, 1984, 1990) with hand and facial illusions. One of the most intriguing for all ages is *The Ultimate Annotated Alphabet* by Mike Wilks (1988). Interestingly, this book was the result of an international competition based on his first wordless book, *The Ultimate Alphabet* (1986), in which contestants tried to find the 7,777 items depicted in his elaborate 26 paintings–one for each letter of the alphabet. The publishers propose that this is the most comprehensive illustrated word list ever produced.

Stewig (1988) criticizes the general content of the recent wordless books, claiming that most feature animals as the main characters and that many are fantasies. While this may have been true in the first two decades when wordless books became popular, it is not true in the last five years. There have been many more concept, visual games, and realistic fiction and nonfiction titles published than animal stories or fantasies. Many books in the late 1980s and early 1990s portray realistic places and experiences with which children can identify.

A Scheme for Classification of Wordless Books

Because of the recent expansion of the variety and types of wordless books being published, a broader definition of the genre is needed. Wordless books (or nearly wordless) seem to naturally fall into five different categories: (a) Concept–books that give familiar sequences like the alphabet, numerals, or months; or labeling books for infants in which a series of familiar objects is pictured for "naming" or identification; (b) Thematic or Sequential–books in which the illustrations are related but not in a conventional story line (i.e., Peter Spier's [1986] *Dreams* in which children watch a series of cloud formations or Kertesz's (1971) *On Reading* which shows a series of beautiful black and white pictures of people enjoying books); (c) Expository–content area books such as science or social studies which give information; (d) Visual Games–books that invite the reader to interact with the pictures, find hidden objects, compare changes from one picture to another, match, predict ahead, create stories, or visually play with illusions and transformations on the page; and (e) Narratives–storybooks that carry simplistic to very intricate story lines.

Table 2 gives the five categories of wordless books with examples of books for each. Note that the categories are not exclusive in that a book can belong under several categories. For instance, in addition to being in the second category (sequential pictures), *Dreams* is also a game-like book that encourages readers to predict what each cloud

formation is before they turn the page. *My First Book of Colors* by Carle (1974) is also a concept book as well as an interactive game book of matching. *The 46 Little Men* (Mogensen, 1990) is interactive, similar to the *Waldo Books* (Handford, 1987a, 1987b), but is also a story of 46 different tracks or adventures.

Table 2

Categories of Wordless Books with Examples

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1. **Concept-Books**
   - A. Familiar Sequence Books
     - Alphabet Books
       (*Gretchen's ABC* by Simpson)
       (*The Annotated Ultimate Alphabet* by Wilks)
     - Counting Books
       (*Anno's Counting Book* by Anno)
       (*It's the 0-1-2-3 Book* by Harada)
     - Months of the Year
       (*Our House on the Hill* by Dupasquier)
       (*Mouse House Months* by Craig)
   - B. Naming/Labeling Books
     (*What is That?* By Hoban)
     (*Let's Talk* published by Discovery Toys)
     (*Pointers* by Hodgson)

2. **Thematic or Sequential Books**
   (*On Reading* by Kertesz)
   (*Dreams* by Spier)
   (*Anno's Journey* by Anno)
   (*Snail, Where Are You?* By Ungerer)
   (*The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Van Allsburg)

3. **Expository Content Area Books**
   - A. Social Studies
     (*The Story of a Main Street* by Goodall)
     (*The New Baby Calf* by Chase & Reid)
   - B. Science
     (*First Nature Watch Sets* by D'Este)
     (*In My Garden; In the Pond; In the Woods* by Cristini & Puricelli)
     (*Oceanography Book* published by DLM)

4. Visual Game Books

A. Seek-and-Find Type
(*Where's Waldo* by Handford)
(*We Hide, You Seek* by Aruego & Dewey)
(*Nature Hide & Seek* by Wood)

B. Compare-Contrast
(*Look! The Ultimate Spot-the-Difference Book* by Wilson)

C. Matching
(*My First Book of Colors* by Carle)

D. Prediction
(*Look, Look, Look* by Hoban)

E. Create-Your-Own
(*Annabel's House* by Messenger)
(*Doll House* by Bateson & Lelei)

F. Illusions and Transformations
(*Humages; Hanimals; Hands-Off* by Marriotti)
(*Adele's Album* by Ponti)

5. Narrative Storybooks

A. Simplistic story line (low inference, no subplots)
(*The Box* by Bottner)
(*The Nest* by Wildsmith)

B. Semicomplicated story line
(*The Bear and the Fly* by Winter)
(*Good Dog, Carl* by Day)

C. Complicated/Intricate story line (high levels of inference and multiple subplots)
(*Silver Pony* by Ward)
(*The Red Thread* by Nygren)
(*The 46 Little Men* by Mogensen)

In summary, the wordless book is a literary genre that relates concepts, portrays themes or sequences of ideas, gives information, provides entertainment and interaction, and/or tells a story through a series of illustrations without written text. It is a recent strong genre of books with a wide array of formats and illustration styles appealing to a variety of age levels. The content and characterization have changed over the years, with recent additions emphasizing more realistic experiences.

Uses and Benefits of Wordless Books

With the proliferation of wordless books in the 1960s and early 70s, educators by the mid-70s advocated the use of wordless books in

classrooms. Over 50 references in the literature suggest benefits of textless books for:

1. Very young children (Huck et al., 1997; Raines & Isbell, 1988a, 1988b; Stewig, 1988);

2. Beginning readers (Ellis & Preston, 1984; Huck et al., 1997; Lukasevich, 1991; Preston & Ellis, 1983; Routman, 1986);

3. Adolescents and older readers (Alfonso, 1987; Hopkins, 1979; Larrick, 1976; McGee & Tompkins, 1983; Read & Smith, 1982b; Rutland, Flatley & Gittinger, 1987; Wason-Ellam, 1989);

4. Disabled readers (D'Angelo, 1981; Dunn, 1988; Giff, Belden, & Rossi, 1985; Gitelman, 1990; Sinatra, 1981); and

5. Culturally and linguistically different readers (Appelt, 1984; Flatley & Rutland, 1986; Rigg, 1977; Sinatra, 1981).

The rationale for encouraging classroom teachers to use wordless books are numerous (see Cianciolo, 1973; Huck et al., 1997; Lindauer, 1988; Routman, 1986; Stewig, 1988). Generally, the reasons for using wordless books are to develop skills including:

1. Oral language and vocabulary (Degler, 1979; Norton, 1985);

2. Reading comprehension (e.g., prediction, inferencing, sequencing, noting details, finding the main ideas, and drawing conclusions) (Arthur, 1982; Joels, 1987; Read & Smith, 1982a);

3. Book handling and conventions (Omotoso & Lamme, 1979; Wendelin & Greenlaw, 1986);

4. Dictation, group, or independent writing (D'Angelo, 1979; Lukasevich, 1991; Purcell-Gates, 1989; Rigg, 1977; Ritchie, 1988);

5. Drama and pantomime (Stewig, 1988; Wason-Ellam, 1989);

6. Story sense (Harste et al., 1988; Jensen, 1985); and

7. Visual literacy viz. the ability to analyze, understand, and appreciate visual messages (Considine, 1986, 1987; Goldstone, 1989; Read & Smith, 1982a).

Other rationales for using wordless books are in the areas of:

8. Assessment of language proficiencies (Jensen, 1985; Purcell-Gates, 1988; Slaughter & Bennett, 1982); and

9. Increased motivation (Stewig, 1988).

As a practitioner, Jensen (1985) suggests that children should create stories from wordless books to determine whether they can identify and reason about the main idea, predict possibilities, and associate events in the story with their own experiences. He also argues that insights into children's story knowledge (i.e., story structure, story language patterns, and dialogue patterns) can be gained by analyzing their spontaneous story construction with a published wordless book. Formally, Slaughter and Bennett (1982), Purcell-Gates (1988), Purcell-Gates, McIntyre and Freppon (1995) have experimented with the analysis of discourse samples using wordless books to evaluate the telling of narratives and linguistic knowledge including written syntax and vocabulary.

In the affective domain, Stewig (1988) suggests three reasons wordless books may be popular and motivational for readers: (a) children today are visually oriented; (b) wordless picture books are more accessible because the reader does not have to decode the words; and (c) wordless books allow a wider (oral and written) interpretation than books with words. In other words, "there are no right or wrong answers in a wordless book, nor must a person be able to 'read' the words to enjoy the action" (Abrahamson, 1981, p. 417). For these reasons, readers/viewers may have more positive attitudes toward books in general.

Wordless Book Research

An extensive review of the literature suggests that numerous educators over the last 25 years have argued that wordless books are advantageous, for a plethora of reasons; but without much concrete evidence. Although intuition and experience of numerous educators seem to support the use of wordless books, there is little research to back up the practice. The following section summarizes the existing wordless book research to date and highlights studies in other areas that might contribute to our knowledge and use of the genre.

Descriptive Studies

A limited number of descriptive studies to date give only some information about wordless books and their use in the classroom

(Brown, 1989; Carty, 1983; Grasty, 1978; Heath, 1990; Lundsteen, 1985; Raines & Isbell, 1988a, Stone, 1986):

1. In one of the earliest surveys of wordless book titles, Grasty (1978) concluded that books published from 1960 to 1976 were mostly fiction, with the main characters usually animals or children, had predominantly male authors and characters, and showed a considerable increase from 1969-76 as compared to 1960-68. Finally, the number of wordless books published was sufficient to establish this as a distinct category of tradebooks.

2. In a replication of Grasty's study, Brown (1989) compared books published from 1977 to 1986 to those from 1960 to 1976. He concluded that the content of the books was more realistic, more books were for sophisticated readers, but the definition of wordless books was still unclear.

3. In a survey study, Raines and Isbell (1988a) found that few wordless books were available in library collections, teachers did not know how to select quality wordless books and few teachers considered the variety of instructional uses for these books. They concluded that wordless books are a valued but under-used and neglected resource.

4. In a descriptive study of kindergarten and first graders, Carty (1983) observed children exploring wordless books in an unguided situation. She found that most children liked looking at wordless books, responded verbally to them, and possessed book-handling skills such as left-to-right progression. But "many of the children were unable to make inferences about their favorite wordless picture books and were further unable to verbalize a simple plot of their favorite wordless picture book" (p. 7).

5. Lundsteen (1985), in a longitudinal study, found that stories told with a wordless book grew longer from ages 3.6 to 5.5. Younger children had less sense of story, more misinterpretations of the story and showed fewer story conventions than the older children. Many 3-year-olds just described the pictures, whereas 4- and 5-year olds attempted to tell a story.

6. In a study also describing longitudinal difference among average readers, Stone (1986) found that students in higher grades (4 and 6) were more successful in telling the main action of pictures and more correct with their interpretations than in the lower grades (K and 2). There was no difference in the use of descriptive words among the four

different grade levels (K, 2, 4, and 6), but girls used significantly more descriptive words than boys in all grades. Children took less time to tell their stories as they rose in grade level.

7. In the most recent study, Heath (1990) found that when good and poor second-grade readers were asked to "read" a wordless book, the poor readers produced longer stories, and were more involved and enthusiastic in the telling of the story than the good readers. She concluded that these findings would support the idea that wordless books can be motivational and represent a risk-free environment where poor readers can find success with books.

Intervention Studies

As in the case with descriptive studies, intervention studies with wordless books are few and inconclusive. In one of the earliest studies cited in the literature, Wells (1975) found that remedial fourth graders experienced significant growth in oral and written language facility and reading skills using a language experience approach with wordless books and nonnarrated films.

However, Coleman-Mitzner's (1980) research (also with remedial fourth graders) did not totally support Wells' findings. She investigated the use of read-alouds and wordless books for creating oral compositions to improve oral language proficiencies, sense of story, reading vocabulary, and comprehension. Like Wells, she found significant differences in creative oral compositions, but there was little difference in reading vocabulary and comprehension between the experimental and control groups. In addition, she reported no statistical improvement for the experimental group in "sense of story" over the 10-week intervention.

Contrary to many educators' recommendations, Smith (1987) found little difference between experimental and control groups in the effectiveness of story structure training with first graders using wordless books.

Assessment Studies

The most productive research has been in the area of assessment of various skills through the medium of wordless books (Hough, Nurss, & Wood, 1987; Jett-Simpson, 1976; Omotoso & Lamme, 1979; Purcell-Gates, 1988; Purcell-Gates et al., 1995; Van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1996). Assessing higher-order inferential thinking, Jett-Simpson (1976) used wordless books to analyze children's inferences during a picture-stimulated storytelling over three grade levels. She found that infer-

ence making was not a function of reading level and that there was more interaction of different inference types than a hierarchy. Character and plot inferences were the most frequently used at each level–kindergarten, second, and fourth grades. She concluded that since wordless books were successful in eliciting inferences, they could be used in the classroom to develop that ability. It is possible that making inferences with wordless books would aid inferential comprehension in written text.

Omotoso and Lamme (1979) report an international study that used wordless books to assess cultural differences in visual literacy and syntactic maturity of 7-year-olds in three ethnic groups, white and black Americans from Florida and Western Nigeria. The researchers suggest that "wordless storybooks might make a bridge between oral storytelling and reading" (p. 416) because they can help teach book handling, encourage recall of events, allow stories to be told in different languages and elicit a variety of very different stories from the same stimuli. They claim that wordless books are good motivators in various cultures.

Hough et al., (1987) asked children to tell three stories, one as an original oral story, another from a single picture, and a third from an eight-page wordless book. The telling of original stories elicited more elaborate language including more words, story conventions, and language functions than either a picture or a wordless book. Hough et al. suggest that pictures and wordless books are helpful props, but that encouraging children to invent their own stories is best for eliciting elaborate language production. Their findings, however, seem confounded by the fact that the researchers may have been inadvertently assessing and comparing two different language registers as described by Purcell-Gates below.

Purcell-Gates (1988), in one of the best studies to date on assessment of oral language production, found lexical and syntactical evidence distinguishing between two different types of oral storytelling: (a) personal storytelling, such as accounts of birthday parties (called oral-narrative register); and (b) fictional stories elicited by "pretend reading" a wordless book (called written-narrative register). She found that both kindergarten and second grade children who had been read to during preschool years (at least five times a week for two years before kindergarten) understood how "book language" worked and possessed the lexical and syntactical knowledge typical in written narratives. Interestingly, the data suggested that the second graders did not have significantly more knowledge of written-narrative language than did kindergarten children.

Purcell-Gates (1989) suggests several implications from her 1988 study. First, reading aloud to children implicitly helps them learn the difference between the two registers–that book language is not the same as the way we talk. In addition, teachers need to encourage activities that explicitly distinguish between the two registers, such as language-experience activities, pretend reading, and prewriting discussions where the children talk through topics but then explicitly switch registers for the writing task. As Purcell-Gates points out, her findings call into question the long-standing belief that "kids should learn that print is speech written down" and "teachers need to build up the children's oral language before attempting to teach them to read and write" (p. 290).

Extending this research in a more recent study, Purcell-Gates et al., (1995) compared both oral and written register production of low-income inner-city children in skills-based and whole-language classrooms. Using the same assessment (storytelling and a wordless book), the researchers found evidence to suggest that school can affect children's knowledge of language because opportunities in classrooms to discuss and explore books contributed to significantly greater growth than the limited opportunities in other classrooms.

Van Kraayenoord and Paris (1996) argue that "meaning-making is the foundation of literacy in the early years" (p. 41). Using wordless books to assess "meaning-making," the researchers found a high correlation between 5- and 6-year-old children's constructed wordless book story and their strategic reading, comprehension, and metacognitive abilities two years later when they were reading. They argue that the story construction activity is a valuable assessment of young children's constructive comprehension processes.

Other Connected Research

Several studies not specifically using wordless books can provide some additional insight into their benefits. These studies fall into two areas: (a) visual literacy and (b) emergent literacy.

Two visual literacy studies give some evidence that using pictures and picture sequences (similar to wordless books) coupled with dictation and/or independent writing may facilitate reading of written text (Fransecky, 1969; The Beacon Project, 1976, as cited in Sinatra, 1986).

Fransecky (1969) found that the reading ability of 100 migrant first, second, and third graders increased when they constructed visual/verbal notebooks to accompany their visual compositions called photostories. Few or no traditional reading materials were used, as the notebooks were the major source of material for reading instruction. In

a second study called the Beacon Project (cited in Sinatra, 1986, pp. 166-167), black inner-city first graders significantly increased their reading achievement as compared to a control group by making their own movies and writing the story action on cue cards using target vocabulary from their basal series. The implication of these two studies is that oral and written composition (compiling an original pictorial sequence similar to wordless books) may be very helpful in facilitating reading skills.

Several emergent literacy studies with young children before formal reading instruction hint at the important role illustrations might play in the process of learning to read (Pontecorvo & Zucchermaglio, 1989; Sulzby, 1982, 1985, 1991).

Pontecorvo and Zucchermaglio's (1989) research showed that there is an overall development of ability to dictate stories with a picture in a language experience situation. Over a year and a half period, they found meaningful differences in the development of the ability of the same 6-year-olds to produce a dictated story (called written-narrative register by Purcell-Gates, 1988). The researchers concluded that educators should consider learning to produce an oral story "as a general process of becoming literate" (p. 125).

Sulzby's research on storybook reading (Sulzby, 1982, 1985, 1991) adds another facet to the importance of pictures in becoming literate. She has documented oral- and written-narrative language with storybooks with words. She observed and then devised five broad categories in a storybook reading classification scheme (1991). The first four categories are of particular interest because the child is "reading" by only looking at the storybook pictures.

The first category is attending to pictures without forming stories–labeling, commenting, and following the action; the second, attending to pictures and forming oral stories much like a conversation or storyteller; the third, attending to pictures but fluctuating between sounding like a "reader" with reading intonation and sounding like a storyteller; and the fourth, attending to the pictures but sounding like a reader with similar-to-original or verbatim-like story. Only the fifth category involves the text, attending to print where the child either refuses to read based on print awareness or reads the text independently or conventionally. The emphasis that pictures have in the initial phases of "pretend" storybook reading is noteworthy as is the fact that Sulzby sees the switch in registers as part of the process of children becoming literate.

What We Know and Do Not Know about Wordless Books

In summary, what do we know that's new about wordless books?

1. Their proliferation in the last 30 years has been astounding, with both individual author/illustrators and sets of wordless books produced in the hundreds by numerous publishing companies;

2. Wordless books have become a strong genre with a much broader definition than just "stories without words" for children;

3. Wordless books have been useful in helping us learn about the different registers in oral language;

4. Many teachers advocate the use of wordless books for varied reasons and populations;

5. The research base is lacking. Many rationales for use of wordless books need to be called into question; many questions remain unanswered.

One major question is, do wordless books give positive support to "real reading?" Countering the positive reasons for using wordless books, Groff (1974) suggests that wordless books will take away from "reading" because they remove children from written language and hinder access to the real literary world where a child hears and reads unusual language and good literature. If one agrees that reading is task-specific and that "one learns to read by reading and being read to," Groff's point may be well taken.

While there is new evidence that skill in constructing an oral wordless book story is predictive of later comprehension ability with text (Van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1996), there is little indicating that learning comprehension skills via a wordless book transfers over to books with words. Sensing the plot or drawing conclusions from a picture may not be the same process as comprehending them in written text. In fact, wordless books may require different comprehension skills. For instance, Sinatra (1986) believes that putting together the meaning of visual compositions requires more inferencing than written text, because " the thread that connects the pictures is inferred while the words and phrases used to connect written sentences are explicit" (p. 162). Because we have little knowledge of how children come to comprehend pictures (Sigel, 1978), how can we make the leap to written text? Brilliant (1984) may be correct when he suggests that as opposed to written text, "visual imagery in the context of an artwork has its own coding/decoding requirements" (p. 17).

Thirdly, we do not know if wordless books may actually provide a bridge between storytelling and reading and the oral- and written-narrative language. While we have evidence that those superior in oral-narrative language before they learn to read and write are the ones to excel in reading and writing by the time they reach sixth grade (Loban, 1976), we don't know if it is necessary for a child to understand and produce book language before he or she reads. We have some evidence that well-read-to children do implicitly have that knowledge (Purcell-Gates, 1988), but that may be because they learned about literacy from books with words, not without.

Finally, numerous other questions remain with regard to literacy development. Does the use of wordless books encourage the development of book handling skills? Might picture-dependency habits, as suggested by Simmon's and Elster's (1990) research of picture stories with words, negatively affect reading acquisition?

Does the use of textless material encourage oral language? If so, what kind? Because utterances are greatly constrained by the words in the highly structured storybook reading routine (Snow & Goldfield, 1983), might children learn more about oral language by listening to their parents and teachers read stories with words than tell the story without words? While Sulzby's research with storybooks suggests that "reading" the picture is a precursor to literacy, she gives no evidence that reading pictures is a necessary precursor to reading words, just possibly a scaffold. Would repeated reading of wordless books by adults be as effective as those with words? Could a classification scheme be applied to wordless book "reading"? Are there levels of development as Sulzby saw with storybook reading? As Brillant's quote (1984) at the beginning of this paper suggests, might wordless books encourage creativity by allowing varied interpretations? More so than structured text?

Conclusion

If the reader is curious about what happened to Jason and his book without those "things," he went home and proudly returned to school a week later displaying his own personal book, illustrated with written text. In the beginning of Jason's quest for meaningful text to go with his wordless book, *The Spider Web* (Brinckloe, 1974), his mother acted as scribe for his oral narration, putting Jason's words underneath each picture that he drew from the book. Soon he tired of the passive role of oral dictation and began to write his own text under each picture that he had drawn. He named the spider "Charlotte" and whereas Brinckloe showed the dismal conclusion of the spider and web being mowed over, Jason chose to end his story with "The grass was cut and it almost

kaught Charlotte. Now Charlotte is loocing for a new home" (invented spelling included). Both Jason's mother and teacher marveled at what a beginning kindergartner had produced and learned–how far he had traveled using a wordless book on the journey to becoming literate.[2]

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[2] The story of Jason is true. It happened one September in the kindergarten classroom of Sandra Huggins, Kramer Elementary School, Oxford, Ohio. Thanks to Sandy, Jason, and his mother for their contribution.

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Reading Instruction in the Middle School Mathematics Classroom

Chet H. Laine, Terry L. Bullock, Bob M. Drake

Since the 1989 publication of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics, it has been increasingly common for mathematics teachers to incorporate some aspects of reading into their classes. The purpose of this study was to determine the amount and type of reading instruction occurring in selected middle school mathematics classrooms. Through this research, we hope to (a) give mathematics teachers some insight into the reading instruction that occurs in their classrooms, (b) help them reflect on how well they integrate reading instruction into the teaching of mathematics, and (c) provide them with suggestions for possible instructional adjustments.

Studies in other disciplines suggest that altering text materials and integrating reading instruction with content instruction leads to greater mastery of both (Horak, 1985; Holbrook, 1984; Seeber, 1984; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). We know, for example, how to alter textbooks to make them more appropriate and we know how to help students use textbooks to better learn content. We also know that prereading strategies–especially when related to text organization, content schemata, and unfamiliar vocabulary–increase student achievement.

Despite this growing body of research, the most recent *Handbook of Research on Mathematics Teaching and Learning* (Grouws, 1992) does not include references to this topic. However, the *University of Chicago School Mathematics Project* (Usiskin, 1990) materials help mathematics teachers infuse more reading and writing into grades 7 to 12 mathemat-

ics classrooms. In addition, a growing number of journal articles and reports provide mathematics teachers with help teaching students to read and comprehend story problems, identify difficulties encountered in reading mathematics, and other specific and practical techniques, activities, and strategies to overcome these reading difficulties (Davis & Gerber, 1994; Hall, 1984; Kirsch & Mosenthal, 1993; Mann & Frame, 1989; Mosenthal & Kirsh, 1993). Winograd (1994) has even provided a bibliography for mathematics teachers interested in interdisciplinary efforts. Moreover, recent reports document many new cross-curricular initiatives for middle school and high school mathematics teachers (Beaupre, 1992; Bravo, 1994; Davis, 1993; Spanos, 1990; Center for Applied Linguistics, 1993).

Method

Subjects

Eleven midwestern, urban, middle school mathematics teachers were identified upon the recommendations of the county mathematics coordinator. Of that 11, 6 volunteered to be part of this study. These six teachers had extensive teaching experience: three had over 20 years of teaching experience, one had 19 years experience, and the others had 8 and 10 respectively. The teachers taught in the middle grades, 5 through 8. Four of the teachers worked in urban settings and two taught in suburban settings. The classrooms observed represented a diverse mix of African American, urban Appalachian, and other white students. In most respects, these teachers would be considered "typical." The videotaped instruction could easily have come from the majority of classrooms in this country. The findings are not based on ideal settings, but rather on the realities of urban classrooms.

Evidence from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Educational Testing Service, 1992) suggests that most mathematics instruction is "traditional" rather than "innovative." Though mathematics teachers report using materials and approaches endorsed by such documents as the NCTM Standards (1989), students report their experiences in mathematics classrooms to be very different from what research suggests to be effective. Findings from the most recent NAEP report suggests that there is still an emphasis on computation exercises to teach mathematics. The subjects in our study, reflecting a growing trend, used manipulatives to illustrate mathematics concepts or teach a particular skill. However, the majority of classroom time was spent on computational exercises. This study examines how reading instruction occurs in such mathematics classrooms.

Observation Instruments

The instrument, validated by reading experts across the country, was a continuous time device designed to account for time devoted to (a) content reading instruction, (b) content instruction using activities other than reading, and (c) non-instruction. These categories are described in detail below. This instrument was chosen for a variety of reasons. It has been used in several other studies (Bullock, Laine, & Slinger, 1990; Hesse, Bullock, & Villalovoz, 1982; Slinger, 1981) and provides an opportunity for comparisons between the use of reading during mathematics instruction and during instruction in other subject disciplines.

Content Reading Instruction. Content area reading instruction is defined in this study as teaching that helps students with reading and understanding assigned materials in mathematics. In order to more adequately assess this type of teaching, this study divided content reading instruction into three types–passive, active, and oblique–each determined by the degree of interaction among teachers, students, and materials. The types of reading activities are described below.

Active Reading Instruction. Active reading instruction includes activities where there is an observable interaction among the teacher, students, and the reading assignment. This instruction is characterized by the teacher engaging students in how to read the material either prior to or during the actual reading of the assigned material. Typical examples of this kind of instruction are teachers preteaching vocabulary that will be encountered in an assignment, setting a purpose for the reading, or providing strategies for reading tables, charts, and graphs that appear in the assignment.

Passive Reading Instruction. Passive reading instruction describes situations in which students attempt to read assignments on their own without any prior teacher direction. An example of this type of reading instruction is when students, upon arrival in class, find only the reading assignment on the chalkboard. Although there is an observable interaction between students and texts, the teacher is uninvolved.

Oblique Reading Instruction. Oblique reading instruction, which lies between active and passive on this continuum, involves interactions between the students and the teachers; however, the instruction does not directly assist students in reading the assignment. Teaching a reading skill without relating it to a specific reading assignment is

typical of this type of instruction (e.g., teaching students how to read charts or tables without relating it to a particular text assignment). Essentially, the teacher is teaching reading out of the context of the mathematics assignment.

Nonreading Content Instruction. Nonreading content instruction includes situations when instructional activities and strategies other than reading are used by the teacher and the students. Examples of these activities include lectures, demonstrations, laboratories, discussions, debates, and film.

Noninstruction. Noninstruction involves no teaching whatsoever. Examples of noninstruction include taking attendance, making announcements, listening to interruptions on the public address system, interacting with visitors to the room, giving students free time, and interrupting and chastising students.

Observation Procedure

The number of observations ranged from two to four class periods per teacher, for a total of 16 observations. The average observation was 49 minutes in duration. Two teachers were observed twice, one was observed three times, and one was observed four times. Fourteen class periods were observed for a total of 13 hours (780 minutes). A trained video technician entered the classrooms before classes started and videotaped the entire lesson. Multiple observations of the same classroom were designed to capture different points during the sequence of a teaching unit (i.e., from the introduction of a topic to the final instruction on that strand). This assured the best chance to capture whatever reading instruction might occur in a given classroom.

Reliability

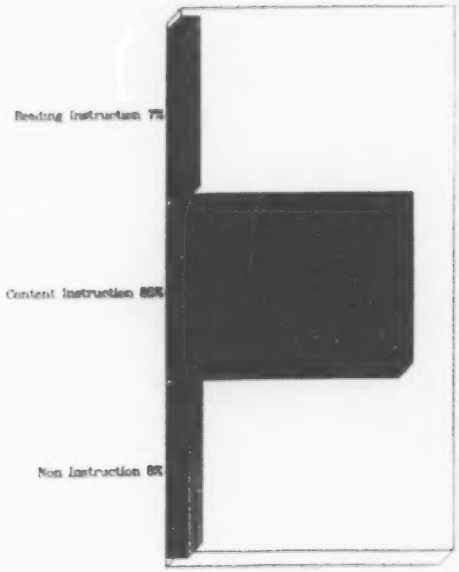
Slinger (1981) developed the continuous time instrument and provided the rater training in all previous studies. Interrater reliability ranged from .85 to 1.0 across the six studies and was .85 in this study of mathematics teachers. Since each session in this study was videotaped, Slinger first previewed all the tapes, then viewed each tape two more times, and coded the data twice. There was a 95% agreement between the first and second viewing of the videotapes. This slight discrepancy in ratings between the first and second viewing of the tapes can be attributed to picking up some additional information about a teacher-student interaction or some further insight about what was being presented by the teacher.

Results

Figure 1 summarizes the percentage of classroom time spent in each of the three main categories: reading instruction (active, passive, and oblique), Nonreading content instruction, and noninstruction in the mathematics classrooms. In the typical class period, 85% of the classroom time was spent on nonreading content instruction. Some form of content reading instruction accounted for 7% of the classroom time and the remaining 8% of the classroom time involved no classroom instruction (noninstruction).

Figure 1

Percentage of Classroom Time Spent in Three Main Categories



Active Reading Instruction

Teachers spent an average of 6% of the classroom time engaged in active reading instruction, that is, in activities where interactions among

the teacher, students, and reading assignment were seen. The teachers were either preparing students for reading assignments or working directly with them while they read. "Preteaching vocabulary" was the primary example of active reading instruction. The teaching of vocabulary consisted of brief explanations of the words in the lesson. These explanations were not coded as "reading" if they were presented orally, without some written context. Sometimes the teacher would point out the word in the book or study sheet or write the word on the overhead. In nearly every case, the teacher provided a brief definition of the word. In one class, students were keeping a notebook of mathematics terms, so every entry during the class was coded as "preteaching vocabulary."

Passive and Oblique Reading Instruction

Passive reading instruction (where students read silently, without teacher interaction) accounted for .03% of the classroom time, while oblique reading instruction (teaching a reading skill without relating it to a specific text) made up 1.05% of the classroom time. Under the oblique reading instruction category, the majority of the classroom time involved reviewing and assessing reading.

Nonreading Content Instruction

Nonreading content instruction was observed about 85% of the classroom time. Nonreading content instruction, which was viewed in all classrooms, included showing filmstrips, giving lectures, doing demonstrations, completing computational exercises, using manipulatives to illustrate mathematical concepts, conducting discussions, performing laboratory experiments, and showing films.

Noninstruction

In this study, only 8% of the classroom time was spent in noninstructional activities. Although there was not much classroom time coded as "noninstructional," there were periods of classroom time where the noise level in the classroom seemed to make it difficult for students to keep on task. Prior studies in other disciplines (Bullock, et al. 1990; Laine, Bullock, & Ford, in press; Slinger, 1981) found noninstructional time was typically in the 15% to 50% range.

Comparison of Content Areas

To date, five studies have been conducted examining the amount of reading, content instruction, and noninstruction that occurs in a variety of content area classrooms. A comparison of these findings appear in

Table 1
Types of Instruction Across Disciplines

Content Disciplines	Average Percentage of Classroom Time Devoted to Specific Types of Instruction				
	Nonreading Content Instruction	Noninstruction	Active Reading Instruction	Passive Reading Instruction	Oblique Reading Instruction
Language Arts & Social Studies (Slinger, 1981)	34	15	6	28	12
Language Arts Classrooms (Hesse, Bullock, & Villalovoz, 1982)	57	22	10	2	9
Reading Classrooms (Hesse, Bullock, & Villalovoz, 1982)	0	7	51	0	42
Social Studies & Language Arts (Bullock, Laine & Slinger, 1990)	20	15	15	15	35
Science (Laine, Bullock & Ford, in press)	24	20	16	7	33
Mathematics (Laine, Bullock & Drake, 1996)	85	8	6	.03	1.05

Table 1. The first study, conducted by Slinger (1981), looked at language arts and social studies classrooms. These were back-to-back classrooms where one teacher taught both classes. This initial study produced the following results: 51% reading instruction, 34% content instruction, and 15% noninstruction.

The second study, conducted in 1982, was actually two studies in one. In the language arts classrooms, reading took place 21% of the time, while content instruction and noninstruction accounted for 57% and 22% of the time respectively. The study also examined reading classrooms to see what kind of results would be obtained. As would be expected, 93% of the time was spent on reading instruction while 0% and 7% were spent on content instruction and noninstruction.

The third study (Bullock et al., 1990) once again examined English and social studies classrooms. This time the amount of reading instruction occurred approximately two-thirds of the time verses one-half of the time in the former study. Content instruction in this 1990 study accounted for one-fifth of the time compared to one-third of the time in the earlier study. In both studies, non-instruction occurred 15% of the time. The fourth study (Laine et al., in press) looked at reading in science classrooms. This particular study was similar to the first and third studies. Reading occurred over one-half the time, content instruction one-fourth of the time, and noninstruction one-fifth of the time.

The fifth and final study looked at mathematics classrooms. This study most closely parallels the examination of reading classrooms in the second study. In the mathematics classrooms, content instruction accounted for 85% of the classroom time, while in the reading classrooms, 93% of the time was spent on reading instruction. The mathematics teachers that we observed do not rely on reading as a mode of instruction but rather showed students how to go about solving problems by demonstrating specific techniques to the students.

Discussion

Our observations of middle school mathematics classrooms indicated that 92% of the classroom time was spent in teacher directed activities. Again, teacher directed activities included active reading instruction (6%), oblique reading instruction (1%), and nonreading content instruction (85%). This research found a significantly greater percentage of classroom time devoted to nonreading content instruction than was found in prior studies of social studies, science, and English classrooms (Bullock et al., 1990: Laine et al., in press; Slinger, 1981).

The other two classifications–passive reading instruction and noninstruction–accounted for 8% of the remaining classroom time. This 8% figure is much lower than the percentage cited in earlier studies. In fact, passive reading instruction by mathematics teachers accounted for less than 1% of the classroom time. In social studies, science, and English classrooms, 22% of the classroom time was devoted to passive reading instruction.

This study of reading in middle school mathematics classrooms revealed some additional interesting findings. First, 85% of the classroom time was spent on nonreading content instruction. Although our instrument does not break down this category into specific areas, this would be a very useful analysis to undertake in a future study. Second, 8% of the classroom time was spent on noninstructional activities. This meant that there was very little classroom time "wasted" in these mathematics classrooms. In other words, students in these classrooms were engaged in learning activities 92% of the time. Third, just slightly over 1% of the classroom time was spent on oblique and passive reading instruction, while 6% of the classroom time was spent on active reading instruction. When these mathematics teachers used reading instruction, they were working hand-in-hand with their students in order to read or understand concepts in the text.

Implications and Conclusions

This study demonstrates that these six experienced mathematics teachers do not generally employ the content reading strategies (active reading instruction) advocated by reading professionals. This may be due to misconceptions about content area reading instruction. Several sources (e.g., O'Brien & Stewart, 1990; Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, & Dishner, 1985; Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1989; Vacca & Vacca, 1989) found that teachers in many disciplines hold such misconceptions. For example, content teachers often feel that "reading" instruction is not their responsibility; all children should have mastered basic reading skills upon leaving elementary school. Some also feel that, as content specialists, prereading activities and guided reading activities take too much time–time taken away from content instruction. These secondary teachers believe that textbook authors provide adequate guidance and that prereading preparation is either unimportant or unnecessary. Finally, some content teachers reject reading strategies, arguing that they are not generalizable to their particular discipline.

The mathematics teachers in this study may reflect this orientation. Clearly, they devoted more time to nonreading content instruction than to using reading to teach mathematics. Reading may not be perceived as a prerequisite for learning mathematics. Misconstruing the advice of

reading professionals, many contemporary mathematics teachers prefer to create environments where students actually "do" mathematics rather than use texts to teach mathematics in a rote manner. "Doing" mathematics, in other words, is preferable to "reading" mathematics.

Given the results of this study, an interesting question emerges: How can reading lead to better mathematics instruction? Mathematics instruction should be active, not passive. Science, English, and social studies are often textbook driven (Bullock, et al., 1990; Holliday, Helgeson, Blosser, & McQuire, 1985) and reading is often a preorganizer for content instruction in these disciplines. In contrast, in most traditional mathematics classrooms, independent reading is relatively rare and mathematics teachers do not rate the teaching of reading strategies as a high priority (O'Rourke, 1980). Prereading is not usually a technique used by mathematics teachers. In addition, most mathematics textbooks are not designed with this strategy in mind. Virtually all mathematics textbooks provide an explication of the computational process. Increasingly, textbook series, such as the one created by the *University of Chicago School Mathematics Project*, provide for some prereading. However, regardless of the textbook used, the effective mathematics teachers that we observed frequently used activities, demonstrations, and projects to create actual real world frameworks. The instructional time (actual reading instruction and nonreading content instruction) was used to help students learn concepts and vocabulary through listening, viewing, or reading. The teachers in this study, like many effective mathematics teachers, employed "hand-on" or "mind-on" mathematics. Whether through reading or some other method, computation, vocabulary, and mathematical concepts were introduced after discovery and exploration of a mathematical phenomenon.

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The Relationship of Standardized Reading Scores to Children's Self-Perception as Readers

Thomas Cloer, Jr., Shana Y. Ross

While standardized reading tests may be used to validate a test of self-perception as a reader, the writers of this study have a different concern. If, in fact, there is a high relationship between the scores of standardized reading tests and children's self-perceptions as readers, we may need to seriously consider how we currently and carelessly use these standardized tests. In order to examine this relationship more carefully, the writers decided to conduct a study similar to Henk and Melnick's (1992) validity studies, but to further see what percentage of the variance in children's self-perceptions can be explained by knowing their standardized reading scores.

Reading educators have shown more interest in the last decade than ever before as to how affective factors influence children's academic achievement and behavior. Few, if any, would argue that attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding reading do not powerfully impact behavior. Kershner (1990) found self-perceptions predictive of remedial success in children with learning disabilities. In the 1992 NAEP findings (Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1992), children in all grades who reported reading more frequently for pleasure had higher average reading proficiency than those reading less frequently. In the 1994 NAEP data (Pinnell et al., 1994) pertaining to children reading aloud, children who were rated more fluent in reading were more likely to have read a book on their own in the previous month than were less fluent readers. Also in the 1994 NAEP findings, 64% of the fluent

readers indicated that their teachers allowed them time daily to read books of their own choosing. Attitudes, values, and beliefs about ourselves as readers do seem to matter.

Review of Literature

Reading educators have recently developed more valid and reliable ways to assess attitudes and self-perceptions related to reading. Most of these instruments are in the professional literature and in the public domain.

The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) (Henk & Melnick, 1995) is a new instrument that measures how intermediate-level (grades 4-6) children feel about themselves as readers. The RSPS is based on Bandura's (1977, 1982) theory of perceived self-efficacy which holds that one's judgment of one's ability in relation to a task will significantly influence behavior. This judgment can directly affect motivation, persistence, endurance, and habits in relation to the task.

The current interest in affective factors has produced new instruments such as the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) by McKenna and Kear (1990). The major difference between the ERAS and earlier instruments is the extensive norms made available with the ERAS for grades 1-6. Comprehensive data on validity and reliability were also presented with the ERAS.

The new RSPS differs from the ERAS in that the self-perception scale is more appropriate for grades 4-6 than for primary children. Primary children differ from intermediate-level children as to how they perceive the reasons for their achievement or lack of it. Research suggests that intermediate-level children tend to attribute their achievement or lack of it to their ability and not to chance (Nicholls, 1979; Ruble, Boggiano, Feldman, & Loebl, 1980). For example, intermediate-level children would be more apt to see low achievement in reading as an indication that they had low abilities for reading and were not hampered by poor teachers or unfortunate circumstances such as sickness on test days.

The RSPS is also more diversified in giving five different subscales of self-perception. General Perception refers to a quick assessment of oneself as a good reader. The Progress scale refers to how well subjects perceive progress being made in reading. The Observational Comparison scale gives perception of how well students are doing in comparison to others. The Social Feedback scale is a measurement of subjects' perceptions developed from the feedback given by teachers, peers, and parents. Finally, the Physiological States scale refers to students'

perceptions of their bodies' reaction to different reading tasks and situations.

Henk and Melnick (1992) determined the correlation between fourth, fifth and sixth grade students' scores on their Reader's Self-Perception Scale and conventional standardized achievement tests. The standardized testing was conducted using the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*, Form J (1990) and the *Stanford Achievement Test*, 8th ed. (1988). The standardized reading achievement tests had been given at the end of the previous academic year before administering the RSPS. Henk and Melnick found statistically significant relationships between the RSPS subscales and both the Iowa and Stanford achievement test scores. Henk and Melnick offered the caveat that future applications of the RSPS depended on continued, systematic instrument development.

Cloer and Pearman (1993a) found that children in the primary grades had significantly better attitudes than middle-grade students in relation to recreational and academic reading as measured by the ERAS. Cloer and Pearman also discovered that the attitudes of the middle-grade children were significantly related to the attitudes of their teachers. One of the most troubling aspects of Cloer and Pearman's study was the decline in attitude with advancing grades. It seemed clear that time spent in school was hazardous to children's attitudes.

Cloer and Pearman (1993b) also found that middle-grade boys' attitudes toward academic and recreational reading dropped very significantly from primary-age boys. Middle-grade girls' attitudes toward recreational reading did not differ significantly from primary girls'. An interesting finding was that the 34 teachers in the study, 18 from grades 1-3 and 16 teachers in grades 4-6, held significantly more negative attitudes toward academic or school reading than toward recreational reading. The study also revealed that teachers' attitudes in the middle grades toward academic reading were significantly related to the boys' attitudes toward academic reading.

A question that provoked the research herein is whether or not students can identify their degree of reading achievement or lack of it. Is it unfortunate but necessary that standardized tests are given and students develop low self-esteem as readers? Miller and Yochum (1990/91) reported the perceptions of a sample of children in grades 1-8 with reading problems identified by two university reading clinics. Eighty-seven percent of these children showed an awareness of their reading difficulty. However, the majority of these subjects, 73%, had word-recognition problems. This does not answer the larger question as to whether or not children's standardized test scores inform them of

their abilities or lack thereof in authentic reading tasks involving literature read for real purposes under conditions that are congruent with real literary pursuits. Kids who cannot recognize words have reading problems and know it. Some kids, however, may not see standardized reading tests as similar tasks to their reading of young novels. Are these kids correct if they identify themselves as having low ability because they scored low on the standardized tests?

Henshaw (1991) interviewed children aged 11 and 12 and asked them to state whether they were good readers or not and if not, why not. She then placed them into three categories in relation to achievement using a reading-age versus a chronological-age discrepancy index. There seemed to be little relation between children's perceptions and their actual reading ability.

Method

The current study attempted to determine the relationship of students' standardized reading test scores to six different measures of students' self-perceptions pertaining to reading. The relationship was analyzed using samples of students from public and private schools, grades 4 and 6.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 106 students in six classrooms of six different teachers of grade 4 in a public elementary school and 192 students from 12 classrooms of three public middle schools, grade 6.

A sample of 29 fourth-grade children from two classrooms in a Catholic private school and two classes of 22 sixth-grade children from a different Catholic private school rounded out the study. There was a total of 349 children, 15 teachers, and six schools involved with the study.

Procedure

Teachers voluntarily participated in the study. The total reading score in normal curve equivalents (NCEs) from the 8th edition of the *Stanford Achievement Test* was pulled from the previous year for all the fourth and sixth graders in public school. The test had been taken in the spring of the previous school year. The same was the case for the private schools, with the exception that the scores were from the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.

Means of students' Total Reading scores in NCE units were compared to six different means of readers' self-concepts as measured by

The Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995). Each of the five different scales plus a total of all five scales combined were analyzed. The five scales were General Perception, Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States. Students were given written statements on the RSPS and responded on a Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 5 points to 1 point. There is only one statement for the General Perception Scale with a possible 5 points: "I think I am a good reader." The Progress Scale has 9 statements or 45 possible points. The Observational Comparison scale has 6 items or a maximum of 30 points. The Social Feedback and Physiological States scales have 9 and 8 statements respectively with maximum points of 45 and 40. The Total RSPS used in this study was a grand total of all five scales.

Pearson product-moment correlations were compiled to establish how much of the variance in the self-concept measures could be accounted for by knowing the previous year's standardized reading test scores of the subjects.

Results

Table 1 presents the number of subjects, means, and standard deviations for all variables in relation to all subjects in public and private schools, grade 4. The Total Reading achievement of these fourth-grade samples was above average, with a standard deviation large enough to show genuine variability within the sample. The General Perception means revealed agreement with the statement "I think I am a good reader." All the other mean measurements of reading self-concept fell exactly as the sample reported by Henk and Melnick (1995).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Reading and Self-Concept, Grade 4

Variable	Mean	*SD*
Public School Students*		
Total Reading	61.92	18.88
General Perception	4.09	1.02
Progress	40.38	4.33

Observational Comparison	20.49	5.29
Social Feedback	33.75	4.80
Physiological States	31.42	5.84
Total RSPS	130.12	17.02
Private School Students**		
Total Reading	66.41	19.75
General Perception	4.17	.80
Progress	40.28	5.56
Observational Comparison	21.48	4.94
Social Feedback	32.17	6.45
Physiological States	33.00	5.65
Total RSPS	131.10	17.88

* n = 106
** n = 29

T-tests for independent means yielded no significant differences either on total reading NCEs or with any of the self-concept means when the samples from public and private schools were compared. The data were found to be consistent with Henk and Melnick (1995) and to be appropriate for studying the predictive power of standardized tests on self-concept of readers.

Table 2 gives the number of subjects, means, and standard deviations for all variables in relation to all subjects in private and public schools, grade 6. The Total Reading achievement of these sixth-grade samples was above average. The General Perceptions means revealed agreement with the statement "I think I am a good reader."

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Reading and Self-Concept, Grade 6

Variable	Mean	*SD*
Public School Students*		
Total Reading	60.27	20.75
General Perception	4.15	.90
Progress	38.52	6.15
Observational Comparison	20.80	5.11
Social Feedback	32.48	6.05
Physiological States	29.63	7.62
Total RSPS	125.59	21.78
Private School Student**		
Total Reading	67.36	14.75
General Perception	3.95	1.02
Progress	38.73	4.27
Observational Comparison	20.55	4.50
Social Feedback	32.32	4.16
Physiological States	30.09	4.84
Total RSPS	125.64	13.39

* n = 192
** n = 22

T-tests for independent means were used to analyze mean differences . No significant differences were found in any of the self-concept means when public and private school students were compared. The public and private samples showed average self-esteem as readers.

Table 3 gives the product moment correlation coefficients, probability, and the portion of the variance in self-concept scores (grade 4) accounted for by knowing the scores of reading achievement from the previous year, grade three.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients for Reading and Self-Concept, Grade 4

Variable X	Variable Y	*r*	*p*	r^2
Public School Students*				
Reading	General Perception	.47	<.001	.22
Reading	Progress	.48	<.001	.23
Reading	Observational Comparison	.55	<.001	.30
Reading	Social Feedback	.31	<.001	.10
Reading	Physiological States	.43	<.001	.18
Reading	Total RSPS	.55	<.001	.30
Private School Students**				
Reading	General Perception	.29	.12	.09
Reading	Progress	.38	.04	.14
Reading	Observational Comparison	.59	<.001	.35
Reading	Social Feedback	.05	.69	.00
Reading	Physiological States	.10	.60	.00
Reading	Total RSPS	.31	.10	.09

* n = 106
** n = 29

The sample of public school students yielded significant relationships between every scale of self-concept and reading achievement as measured by *The Stanford Achievement Test*. The correlation between reading and the Observational Comparison scale alone, which measures the students' perceptions as to how they compare with other readers, accounted for 30% of the variance on that particular self-concept scale of these public school students. For the sample of private school students, the Total Reading score from the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* accounted for 35% of the variance on the Observational Comparison scale. For this sample from private school, the correlation between reading achievement and the Progress scale was also statistically significant.

In Table 4, the relationship between reading achievement test scores and self-concept as measured by every scale of the RSPS was statistically significant for the sample of public school students, grade 6. The same was true for the private school students with the exception of one scale, Progress. In this sample of 6th-grade private school students, the standardized reading achievement test score accounted for 52% of the variance on the Observational Comparison scale of self-concept, 41% of the variance on the General Perception scale, and 30% of the variance on the Physiological States scale. Standardized reading achievement test scores were highly related to these self-concept scales.

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients for Reading and Self-Concept, Grade 6

Variable X	Variable Y	r	p	r^2
Public School Students*				
Reading	General Perception	.22	<.001	.05
Reading	Progress	.29	<.001	.08
Reading	Observational Comparison	.42	<.001	.18
Reading	Social Feedback	.15	.04	.02
Reading	Physiological States	.29	<.001	.08
Reading	Total RSPS	.33	<.001	.11

Private School Students**				
Reading	General Perception	.64	<.001	.41
Reading	Progress	.09	.66	.00
Reading	Observational Comparison	.72	<.001	.52
Reading	Social Feedback	.42	.05	.17
Reading	Physiological States	.55	<.001	.30
Reading	Total RSPS	.64	<.001	.41

* n = 192
** n = 22

Discussion

Henk and Melnick (1995) stated that with additional research, they hoped that the RSPS will become a routine affective assessment, as common as well-known cognitive measures. This is also our desire. However, we wish to assert that while validating the instrument with research is a necessary and worthwhile endeavor, we must also examine the nature of this validity exercise. While it surely is true that children's self-concepts are related to their previous scores on standardized reading tests, we need also to be asking if this is problematic.

The IRA/NCTE Joint Task Force on Assessment (1994) has as its first standard the clear statement that an individual student's intellectual, social, and emotional well-being must be paramount in decisions regarding assessment. The rationale states that assessment must serve and not harm the individual student. The rationale states:

> First and foremost, assessment must encourage students to reflect on their own reading and writing in productive ways, to evaluate their own intellectual growth, and to set goals. In this way, students become involved in and responsible for their own learning and better able to assist the teacher in focusing instruction. (p. 13)

This suggests that in the future researchers need to find ways to examine the relationship between students' performance on the RSPS and their performance on measures of reading that differ from what is measured by standardized tests. As we enter the 21st century, educa-

tors are using both cognitive and affective instruments to measure outcomes. As a result of affective measurement, teachers may feel obligated to give more frequent and concrete illustrations of progress and may want to give students more opportunities to read in situations that are nonthreatening. Educators might want to utilize more strategies such as echo reading, choral reading, multiple-response reading, etc. Perhaps, this research might serve as a reminder for teachers to daily model the enjoyment, appreciation, relaxation, and gratification that can be gained from reading. If so, one might see that the difference between the longitudinal effects of standardized reading testing versus evaluation of children's self-perceptions could be vastly different in terms of impact on individual classrooms.

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Perspectives on Schema and Reading Comprehension: Content or Formal Schema? What Promises?

Samuel S. Myers

It has now almost become a pedestrian perspective in educational research and pedagogical practice that background knowledge influences interpretations of text. The primary assumption is that what students already know affects what they will learn from reading, implying that readers' prior knowledge interacts with text to create psychological meaning. Researchers have alluded to prior knowledge as knowledge structures, plans, scripts, frames or schemata (e.g. Rumelhart, 1975; Shank & Abelson, 1975). Schemata are frameworks for organizing and remembering information about a topic.

Introduction of the term "schema" into psychology often has been associated with Bartlett (1932), although he attributes his use of the term to Head (1926). Subsequent to the mid 1970s, the term schema and the related notions of plans, frames, and scripts have been emphasized in cognitive science (Chafe, 1976; Filmore, 1975; Rumelhart, 1975; Shank & Abelson, 1975).

Since the mid 70s, there has been an increasing body of research providing both explicit and implicit support for the view (often simply interpreted) that the essence of meaning emanates from the readers' fund of experience. Two sources perhaps best summarize the research support for this perspective. According to Langer (1982), the experiences, background knowledge, skills, and abilities that the reader takes

to the reading situation impact the level of comprehension that will result. Adams and Bruce (1982) contend that "comprehension is the use of prior knowledge to create new knowledge" (p. 23).

Most teachers consider the emphasis on background knowledge to be consistent with their usual practices of preteaching vocabulary and providing prerequisite experience. More recent strategies for activating background knowledge such as semantic mapping and student-generated questions are also relevant. Although the notion that teachers should begin with what students already know is often simply interpreted, Langer (1982) has emphasized that it is a "particularly sophisticated concept, and when understood both theoretically and practically will permit the teacher to help students read their texts with greater ease" (p. 149). In other words, proper understanding of the notion of schema holds the promise for improving both instruction and learning.

Types of Schemata

Schemata in reading comprehension are not confined to content information, whether relating to general knowledge or to knowledge of a specific subject area domain. In fact, within the schema-theoretic view of reading, teachers are normally preoccupied with three types of schemata. One type relates to content knowledge, that is, knowledge of topics and concepts for reading in particular subject areas. Teachers of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and social studies often assist students in developing the knowledge required for understanding the technical and specialized vocabulary of their fields.

Another type of schema is general world knowledge having to do with understanding social relationships, activities, and causes that are germane to many specific situations or cultures. General world knowledge enables readers to engage in appropriate inferences while reading and to relate with persons and situations. Thus some suggest that there are two types of content schemata–one that is specific to knowledge of a discipline; the other to general world knowledge.

The third type of schema concerns knowledge of rhetorical structures, used for organizing and signaling the organization of texts (Meyer, 1975). This type of knowledge is often referred to as formal schemata. Knowledge of how stories and expository discourse are structured is expected to reduce the processing demands of reading, thereby facilitating progress in comprehension. Both content and formal knowledge, therefore, influence reading comprehension. Accordingly, instructional strategies designed to facilitate these kinds of knowledge enhance reading comprehension.

Much of the research literature related to schema theory tends to underscore the significance of content schemata almost to the exclusion of formal schemata (e.g., Chi, 1978; Chiesi, Spilich, & Voss, 1979). Considered from this perspective, background knowledge of content is the dominant factor influencing comprehension during academic pursuits. A more inclusive perspective, however, is that readers bring both formal schemata structures and content schemata to bear on reading.

This discussion makes no attempt to produce a complete up-to-date list of the research findings on schema-theoretic perspectives on reading comprehension. Rather, the aim is to suggest what promises this holds for ESL classroom instruction.

Types of Rhetorical Organization of Expository Prose

Meyer (1975, 1977a), Meyer, Brandt and Bluth (1980), and Meyer and Freedle (1984) have investigated the comprehension and recall of readers whose native language was English, interacting with different types of expository prose. These studies indicated that different rhetorical patterns interact differently with readers' background knowledge and processing strategies. Meyer (1975, 1979) identified five basic expository patterns. These five types she designated as: collection, description, causation, problem/solving, and comparison. Although these five types are not exhaustive or definitive, Meyer's research demonstrated that there is valid support for the view that these patterns represent significantly different types of prose. The conclusions emerging from research on rhetorical patterns carry special significance for ESL pedagogical practice. Two such conclusions are accorded brief mention here. First of all, patterns of organization are representative of the different types of logical connections among the important and less important ideas in expository material. Second, students who are aware of the existence and purpose of these patterns, are very likely to use them to improve comprehension.

The Separate Effects of Formal and Content Schemata in Reading Comprehension

As mentioned earlier, the reader brings both content and formal schemata to the reading act. Research has been conducted to determine the different effects of these two types of knowledge. When investigating the impact of formal schemata, the content of a text is kept constant. The rhetorical organization is then manipulated as comparable groups of subjects read the same information organized in different rhetorical patterns. Any performance differences on dependent measures are then interpreted to show the effects of the different organizational patterns.

One study of this type is mentioned. Operating within Meyer's (1975, 1979) theoretical framework, Carrell (1984) used expository prose to determine the effects of four different English rhetorical patterns on the reading recall of ESL readers of different native languages. Eighty students enrolled in an intensive English program for foreign students participated in the study. The native language groups were: Spanish, Arabic, Oriental (predominantly Korean) and others, predominantly Malaysian. The four types of English rhetorical patterns were causation, problem/solution, comparison, and collection of descriptions.

In Carrell's (1984) view, the most encouraging finding of this study for instruction and learning was that if ESL readers possessed the appropriate formal schema to process expository texts and if they used that knowledge to organize their recall protocols, more information was recalled. An important implication of these findings is that teaching students the need to identify and use different discourse structures may be effective in promoting the comprehension of ESL students (see also Connor, 1984).

It is also quite possible to test for the effects of content schemata on comprehension. In this case, the rhetorical structure of a text is kept constant while content schemata are manipulated. Here the researcher measured performance differences between the groups attributable to readers' background knowledge. A study conducted by Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson (1979) represents the seminal work in the area. They found that the background knowledge of students from different cultures strongly influenced their comprehension.

The Simultaneous Effects of Content and Formal Schemata

Prior to 1987, little progress was made studying the comparative influences of formal and content schemata in relation to each other. Previous investigations had tended to invite the conclusion that reading a text with familiar content written in a familiar rhetorical pattern would be relatively easy and that reading one with unfamiliar content and an unfamiliar rhetorical pattern would be relatively difficult. In 1987 Carrell investigated the simultaneous effects of content and formal schemata on ESL students' comprehension of both culturally specific content and formal schemata, as well as the potential interaction between them. In this study, high-intermediate ESL students read, recalled, and responded to questions based on each of two texts. Students had either Muslim or Catholic Spanish backgrounds. One text contained culturally familiar content and the other culturally unfamiliar content. In each group, half of the students read the texts written in

a familiar clearly signaled rhetorical pattern; the other half read a text with an unfamiliar, altered rhetorical pattern.

The finding of this study suggested that when both content and form were variables in ESL reading comprehension, content was generally more important than form. Where both content and form were familiar, comprehension was relatively easy. Conversely, when both content and form were unfamiliar, comprehension was relatively difficult. Interestingly, when either content or form was unfamiliar, content presented more comprehension difficulties for the reader than form.

Carrell's (1987) study suggests that in the ESL reading classroom content is of primary importance. Carrell argued that teachers of ESL reading "need to be aware of the important role in ESL reading, of background knowledge of text content" (p. 477). The applicability of these observations to classrooms involving subjects with English as their native language was documented in later studies (Beck, McKeown, Sinatra, & Loxterman 1991; Britton 1990). The nature of the relationship between content knowledge and knowledge of text structures was the focus of a research review by Roller (1990). In analyzing findings regarding the role of these two types of knowledge, Roller concluded that the extent of the influence of text structure is contingent on familiarity with text content. Specifically, structure is most facilitative when content is moderately unfamiliar and diminishes in importance if readers have adequate familiarity with the content.

One permissible inference is that sufficient background knowledge of content organized in a familiar structure may result in better comprehension. The assumption here is that, given the conceptual difficulty of a text, familiar structure and content knowledge will yield better comprehension, with neither source dominating the other. This is precisely what was suggested by the results of a later study by McKeown, Beck, Sinatra, and Loxterman (1992).

In the McKeown et al. study, students who read a text revised to create a familiar structure (through clarification and elaboration) were able to apply information they were taught to focus on and comprehend the most important information in the revised text. In contrast, students who read the original text and who were taught the same background information were less able to capitalize on the advantage provided by that information. McKeown et al. (1992) used the concept of coherence to describe the kind of organizational text structure which facilitates a reader's comprehension task. According to them, coherence is the extent to which the sequencing of ideas in a text makes sense and the degree to which the signal words render those ideas and their relation-

ships apparent. McKeown's et al. findings indicated that content knowledge was most useful if the text structure was clear and logical enough (that is, familiar) to allow readers to see the relationships between text information and previous knowledge. This helped readers integrate prior information with new information "to create a meaningful representation" (p. 91).

The results of the study by McKeown et al. (1992) provide general support for Carrell's (1987) finding that when both content and form are familiar comprehension is relatively easy. As pointed out by Roller (1990), background knowledge of content and of text structure interacts. Background knowledge of content in varying quanta can compensate for varying levels of familiarity with text structure.

Summary and Conclusion

In this article, the discussion of the research literature on the schema-interactive view of reading comprehension underscores the extent to which the more recent perspectives about reading have shifted from that of a simple process of lifting information from a text to that of an active sophisticated process.

In testing for the separate effects of text structure (formal schemata) on reading comprehension, the research indicates that for native English readers (Meyer et al. 1980; Meyer & Freedle, 1984) as well as for non-native ESL readers (Carrell, 1984) expository texts interact with readers' content knowledge and processing strategies differently. More specifically, for both groups of readers more highly organized types of discourse–comparison, causation and problem/solution–facilitate comprehension more than loosely organized descriptive patterns.

Awareness of the implications of such findings for teaching and learning has now become common at different levels of pedagogical practice. Indeed, most teachers are familiar with the notion of building the background knowledge of content required for understanding a forthcoming reading selection. They are aware that prior knowledge about a topic is necessary to establish and confirm expectations that guide reading. However, teachers, particularly ESL teachers, appear to be less familiar with the practice of assessing the readers' knowledge of text structures.

More recent findings, relating to the separate effects of both content and formal schemata on comprehension, suggest at least one simple but useful reminder: Although the principal variable influencing whether readers will comprehend a particular text appears to be background content knowledge, familiarity with an author's organizational pattern

also assists readers. This knowledge helps them interpret a text by enabling them to anticipate the author's purpose.

The research findings on the simultaneous effects of content and formal schemata (Carrell, 1987; McKeown et al., 1992) suggest promises for more informed instructional practice in both native English speaking classes and ESL classes. The promises and possibilities for improved instruction are always the responsibility of teachers who need to take into account the conceptual difficulty and organizational discourse patterns of texts in relation to their students' knowledge of both.

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The Making of a Researcher: A Self-Study of a Mentoring Relationship

Josephine Peyton Young and Donna E. Alvermann

The doctoral mentoring relationship is an intense one. Advisors and advisees must learn to work together for long hours at a time refining the ideas that will eventually go into crafting the final dissertation. Simultaneously the two members in this relationship are engaged in a socialization process that is complex beyond words. All of this takes place in an atmosphere charged with the demands and pressure to meet external time lines and requirements imposed by the institutions in which they work.

The purpose of this paper is to consider how our mentoring relationship (professor–Donna and doctoral student–Josephine) reflected an interplay among three social contexts: a local or situational context, an institutional context, and the larger societal context. We focus on our interactions during a process that began with formulating Josephine's dissertation research question and extended to the proposal-writing stage. Specifically, our focus is on the power relations, all of which pertain to creating, valuing, and exchanging knowledge that were bound up in our professor/student dyad. We consider these power relations so that we can better understand our relationship and contribute to the literature on mentoring relationships in literacy.

Related Literature

A review of the literature on the nature of mentoring relationships between women in higher education suggests that this is largely "uncharted territory" (Heinrich, 1996, p. 447). Moreover, the literature that does exist represents data obtained largely from descriptive surveys and quasi-experimental designs (Daresh, 1995). Although the information derived from such designs is useful in understanding the more general aspects of mentoring, insufficient attention has been paid to the interpersonal mentoring relationships between women in the academy.

Heinrich (1995) examined the relationships between women doctoral students and their female advisors. A number of the women doctoral students in her study told her that they transferred certain characteristics of their earlier relationships with mothering figures to the relationship they had with women on their committees. And, as one might suspect, this transference of expectations from one type of mentoring relationship to another was not without its own set of problems. When relationships with their doctoral advisors reminded the women in the study of nonsupportive parental relationships with their mothers, they frequently maintained a silence about their disappointments–a practice that ultimately shortchanged their own personal and professional development.

On the brighter side, Johnsrud (1991) documented the necessity of striking a balance between autonomy and connectedness in mentoring relationships. Working from a developmental perspective that was compatible with feminist theorizing, Johnsrud concluded:

> The orientation of women toward connectedness and their potential for interdependence suggests that academic women have the capacity to use the structure of the mentoring relationship to work through issues of dependency and autonomy and ultimately shape a relationship committed to the mutual growth and empowerment of both participants." (p. 11)

This view acknowledges that the power distribution in such relationships is not structurally equitable. Power relations regulate and guide all discourses and social interactions. The institution of schooling structures power relations between teacher and student (Brodkey, 1989). These power relations set unspoken boundaries and guidelines as to how we are "supposed" to interact as professor and student. However, as Johnsrud contends, the power relations need not be used to dominate and control. She posits that the advisor and advisee can work within the structured power relations to obtain an interdependent

professor-student relationship. This is an issue of power that we found relevant to our mentoring relationship.

Methodology

We used Fairclough's (1989) critical discourse analysis approach to help us think about the influences of these three different social contexts (situational, institutional, and societal) on the way we interacted with each other. Fairclough (1995) has argued that for critical discourse analysis to become a viable research methodology it must engage with these four themes:

- the relationship between language, ideology and power
- the relationship between discourse and sociocultural change
- the centrality of textual analysis to social research
- the principles and practices of critical language awareness (p. ix)

From his point of view, discourse analysis rests on the assumption that language is a form of social practice. Central to any understanding of critical discourse analysis is the asymmetrical nature of power relationships. Such relationships, Fairclough (1995) has maintained, must be viewed within a larger social system. For example, in our self-study of a mentoring relationship between professor and doctoral student, it was not enough that we consider only the power asymmetries typically associated with being positioned as either advisor or advisee. Instead, it was necessary to view our relationship in terms of how it intersected with family, university, and social life.

Sometimes referred to as the three-dimensional framework, critical discourse analysis has as its aim the mapping of three forms of analysis on to one another: "analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2). Each analysis shapes and is shaped by the other. That is to say, the power relationships inherent in each other are fluid and nonlinear.

Procedure and Data Sources

Over the 1996 summer and fall quarters at the University of Georgia, Josephine and Donna engaged in the process of formulating Josephine's dissertation research question and research proposal. We corresponded by e-mail and had face-to-face conversations. Josephine

also wrote her reflections about the process in a private journal. The e-mail messages and Josephine's journal entries were analyzed toward the end of fall quarter at the time Josephine was writing the final draft of her prospectus. The prospectus centered largely on Josephine's adaptation of Fairclough's (1989) critical discourse analysis.

We used the occasion for writing our American Reading Forum paper as a time to try out Fairclough's (1989) analysis. Our process included independently reading the data from our e-mail conversations and Josephine's journal. We coded these texts using the three social contexts identified by Fairclough (i.e., situational, institutional, and societal contexts). We discovered through this process that it was difficult to tease out how different social contexts explicitly influenced our interactions without considering the impact of what Fairclough calls member resources (Gilbert, 1992). Member resources are the personal knowledge, beliefs, values and assumptions we draw upon as we produce and interpret texts. Our member resources are shaped by and shape situational, institutional, and societal social practices.

In our case, the situational context pertained to writing a prospectus, and in a smaller way, to passing the preliminary exams. Donna and Josephine drew upon their different member resources during the process. For instance, Donna, having gone through the process of writing a prospectus and having guided others through the process had first-hand knowledge of the personal struggles Josephine was likely to experience. Donna also knew what the University of Georgia's Department of Reading Education expected in a doctoral prospectus. Josephine had only vague ideas about the institutional expectations; her interactions were informed by knowledge of herself as a student, researcher, and writer, and through her values and beliefs about being a wife and mother.

Participants' Backgrounds

Josephine: My decision to enroll in a doctoral program was a careful one. I had a teaching job that I loved and my family was content. I attended the National Reading Conference (NRC) in 1992 for the specific purpose of finding a doctoral program in reading education that suited me. I went to NRC in search of a professor who would encourage me to think in different ways and who was interested in listening to adolescents. I met Donna at an alternative session and immediately liked what she said and the questions that she asked the others at the session. We later had several conversations in person and by phone. I set my goal to study with Donna and to attend Georgia's doctoral program.

Donna: I recall being introduced to Josephine at NRC by a graduate student who was enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Georgia. At this first meeting I remember thinking that Josephine had an enthusiasm and air about her that seemed in keeping with the Georgia program. She was a self-starter, had a goal in mind, and seemed at ease about working out the ambiguities associated with doctoral studies. I was especially attracted to her experiences as an alternative teacher at the secondary level. Whether consciously or subconsciously, I suspect I warmed to her teaching experiences because they were compatible with my own. Her thinking reflected an ideological slant not unlike what I had pursued in the sixties. In retrospect, Josephine seemed like the kind of student who would stretch my own thinking and be sufficiently self-assured to disagree with me on issues that she saw differently from me.

Our Mentoring Relationship

Below represents the data from our self-study as a conversation. The conversation consists of a sampling of our e-mail messages integrated with some of Josephine's journal entries. We use the conversation format to illustrate how our mentoring relationship was influenced by the three contexts identified by Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.

Journal Entry: Josephine's Journal 8/21/96

> As I try to write a prelim on whole language and feminist pedagogy, my mind wanders off to worry about not having a dissertation topic. I want to have a job in 1998 in a place that Peyton can start high school. It would be ideal to move just before his 9th grade year–fall 1998. If I want to do a good dissertation study, I need to get started on it soon! I also wonder why I don't have a burning question and why I am so interested in whatever I am reading at the present. I came into the program with a desire to work with pregnant girls, but now my interests seem to be so broad I can't decide. No question or theory seems to capture my attention. I have noticed that most of my interests somehow relate to critical theory and pedagogy. I find myself looking for issues of power in everything I read.

E-mail: from Donna - 8/21/96

> Keeping a diary/journal is a good idea; no matter what you do, it should be helpful in framing the reason you choose to pursue the question you finally decide upon. That's always the first

question you get asked at your prospectus and dissertation defenses. Saying you kept a journal and that it helped you decide would be novel and credible.

Journal Entry: Josephine - 8/21/96

I have got to write prelims. I think I did everything I could do yesterday in my ritual to get ready to write–except the garden, and I may spend a little time there today. I cleaned the boys' room with the boys, rearranged their room, got them new bunk beds, got my hair cut, went to grocery store, and then went to buy school supplies. I think today after I write Aunt Jean and Mama, I will read some stuff on Dewey and outline the changes I will make to prelim. I think I should relax about this prelim and just write it!

E-mail: from Donna - 8/31/96

Hope all is going well for you and that the prelim you are doing is still of interest to you. I'm checking e-mail about every other day, so if you need anything, let me know. Cheers, Donna.

E-mail: from Donna - 9/28/96

How do you plan to work this revision of your prelim question into your overall work plan? Make the changes first or plunge into Linda's prelim question? My sense would be that it isn't inconsequential–the order of things I mean. Here's my gut-level thinking, but obviously, feel free to adjust to your internal (and external) workings.

1. Do Linda's question next, so your timing isn't broken in terms of getting a prospectus written in time to defend it and collect data beginning mid-January.

2. While Linda is reading your prelim question, you could be making the revisions on Michelle and Jim's question. (While, at the same time making a stab at your first draft of a prospectus.) Just a thought.

Journal entry: Josephine - 10/2/96

I have taken Donna's advice and started Linda's prelim. She suggested that I wait to revise and get started on Linda's because (1) it may lead into prospectus. (2) I could revise Michelle and Jim's when Linda is reading hers and after prospectus is drafted–

She [Donna] has never suggested a plan of action to me–I thought since it was so rare for her to do so, I should follow her suggestion. I really need to organize my time well to get a prospectus and a prelim written and another one revised.

Journal entry: Josephine - 10/19/96

Donna brought up what worries me the most–no theoretical base. I have spent three years reading and writing about theory–I wonder why it's not visible in my thinking. Why hasn't all this reading and thinking transferred more to my life? I don't want it to be that I am not really interested in it and have spent my life here at Georgia reading it. I wish I didn't feel the need to get out of UGA within the next couple of years. I think with more thinking time, I could really make this idea come to life. I need to continue thinking about it, but I feel so pushed to write prelim, edit other prelim and finish chapter–then there is NRC paper and ARF paper. I feel so disjointed and afraid that I won't do a good job on anything. If I finish those papers I will be lucky, much less write a prospectus. I feel like I'm about to cheat myself on the most important part of my program. It seems like too much. I want the world to stop! I need to slow down–I waste time because I don't concentrate on what I'm reading or I start worrying about the amount of work I have to do and get in a panic.

E-mail: from Josephine - 10/30/96

Thanks for asking about my progress yesterday. I do appreciate your asking. It is slow, but the last couple of days have been profitable (I think). I have rewritten the beginning four pages of prelim four times. This time I will not change it–I will just write on. I may need a firm talking to if I don't. I'm worried about the ARF paper. Think we can write it between NRC and ARF and on the way down to ARF in your van? Probably not the best plan.

E-mail: from Donna - 10/30/96

Funny, I woke up this morning worrying about the ARF paper, too. I think we'd be wise not to wing it. The sessions are usually small but well attended in terms of commitment by the participants. They pride themselves, and rightly so, on being a small organization that gives quality time to presentations and presenters. So, I'm really hesitant about putting off the ARF paper. As you can see, I have my biases, but I'm open to alternative suggestions.

E-mail: from Donna - 11/8/96

> Hope you write, write, write all weekend long. You are off to a good start (really good start, I think), and so don't let go of the momentum. Call in the troops (Randy, Peyton, and Marshall) if you begin to waver. They'll set you straight. When are we meeting again to go over the next draft?

E-mail: from Donna - 11/17/96

> I'll have your prospectus read and responded to by Monday, as I promised. I read it all the way through yesterday and made comments, but today I still need to read a chapter in the new Fairclough book on critical discourse analysis before I can respond to your analysis section. I'll include a copy of the chapter I read, so you, too, can see what you think.

E-mail: from Donna - 11/20/96

> Your explanation of how you think you might use critical discourse analysis is piquing my interest. Good! Stay with it...at least through the prospectus meeting. If people have problems with it or if you change your mind later, you can always track down another analytical scheme. In the meantime, finding something you like enables you to move forward! Go for it! Cheers, Donna.

E-mail: from Josephine 11/24/96

> Thanks for your quick response to prospectus–you must have figured I'd be checking e-mail hoping for a preview of your thoughts. I've been catalogue shopping today for family and in-law Christmas presents–been pretty successful so far. Will begin prelim later. Glad your mother understands weather conditions, now you don't have to feel guilty!

E-mail: from Donna 11/24/96

> After seeing the work that still needs doing on the sections that you rewrote for this time, I think you will be wise to forego the boys' soccer games this weekend. It's not major rewriting but it will take time. If you could do that next Saturday and Sunday and get me your revision by Monday before NRC, I could read it that night and feel secure that you are "on course" and on the time line you set for yourself. I know you wanted to spend the

better part of this week on the prelims. I want you to do a good job on them. At the same time, I want you to revise what you have so far, while it's fresh on your mind, but most importantly because the prospectus is so important and it will need to be prioritized. It does go against your tentative schedule a bit.

E-mail: from Josephine 11/25/96

Your plan is fine if I can do it. I will try to finish up prelims before the weekend and begin revising prospectus.

E-mail: from Donna - 11/25/96

Don't panic. I'm not pressuring you to take a short-cut on your prelim revision (actually, I don't think you are panicked). It's just that I see prelims as being secondary to your major goal right now, and that is to finish your prospectus with as much quality time put on it as possible. I bet if you sit down and assess what really has to be done, to make the prelim for Michelle and Jim coherent, you'll find it's not so big a job after all. In the meantime, do try to finish Linda's prelim.

E-mail: from Josephine - 11/25/96

I am not panicked yet–but at times I do feel close. I keep saying that I will do as much as I can. Today has gone well so far on Linda's prelim. I would love to have it finished by Wednesday–but not sure it's possible. I haven't even looked at MC's response in a long time. At the time I don't remember thinking it was going to be a terribly big job. But I could be wrong. I know the prospectus is the big thing to get written, but these prelims have to be done also. I really don't mind you pushing me along on this–but at times I wonder if you know more about what I can do that I do!

E-mail: from Josephine - 11/29/96

My father just called and confirmed that his wedding party is December 14th. Well, that's just about the worst weekend possible in my life. I am exploring options about what to do. He has planned a huge party and says he really wants me there. I have mixed feelings about even going, but I will feel very guilty not attending. I'm writing you to ask you how much writing do you think I can really do at ARF? I'm also wondering how horrible it would be to skip ARF. I hate thinking about that as an option,

but I am getting so stressed out! I don't want to move the prospectus deadline pass the 20th (that is not an option I am contemplating).

E-mail: from Donna - 11/29/96

You are experiencing a fair amount of stress, I know, and yes, it is natural (at least I've seen the same symptoms in other graduate students with whom I've worked.) Whether one has lots of time to write the prospectus or does it in a fairly concentrated space of time, the stress level is high. I think it is fairly common, too, for professors to go through this when they get behind in their commitments (or are over committed). It's an "illness" of higher ed that you learn to live with (and experience as little as possible hopefully). As for ARF...I really don't see skipping the meeting as a way out. It is not a session I can do by myself, and we don't do UGA or ourselves any service backing out of an ARF presentation. Hope I have helped. You will get everything done. Just keep thinking positively and don't panic. I have faith in you...Donna.

E-mail: from Josephine - 11/29/96

I'm over my stress attack that I wrote you about this morning.

E-mail: from Donna 11/30/96

I answered your first message before reading your second. Glad you are feeling better about the numerous things you have to do. Also, it sounds like you will be able to do both ARF and your father's wedding party. That's good! Cheers, Donna.

Interpretation of Conversation

Our locally situated interactions cannot be viewed as separate or apart from the larger institutional and societal contexts in which we worked and played. Nor can they be separated from our personal knowledge, beliefs, values, and assumptions. As Josephine struggled to formulate and write her preliminary exam papers and her prospectus, it became evident that our comments back and forth represented the complex interplay of Fairclough's (1989) three contexts. Within the situational context, Donna's comments were informed by her previous experiences as a doctoral student and as an advisor to other doctoral students caught up in the tedious process of writing a prospectus. The ongoing personal and professional relationship between us also influ-

enced how we produced and interpreted our texts. For instance, Josephine interpreted Donna's comments as well meaning, not meant to harass.

Within the institutional context, Donna guided Josephine through the proposal writing process–a process that has a rather rigid format. She explicitly and implicitly directed Josephine to participate in the appropriate social practices of a doctoral student. Donna also pointed out to Josephine a way to manipulate the predetermined procedure, which at the University of Georgia typically means finishing prelims before writing a prospectus. Josephine's interactions were also informed by the institutional contexts. She intuitively knew how to be a student, when to "follow directions," and when to proceed on her own. She chose to follow Donna's suggested time table.

Within the larger societal context, Josephine's concern for socially sanctioned practices that she both valued and found pleasurable (e.g., attending her son's soccer game, preparing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays) didn't allow her to speed up the prelim and prospectus writing process, as Donna had suggested. Josephine preferred to work at a slower rate, one that did not short change her family and her social life outside of the university. Donna empathized with Josephine's desire to take part in a socially active family life, and thus she didn't insist that institutional expectations for prospectus writing take priority over that life.

Postscript by Donna

In retrospect, I do not have a sense of Josephine's and my interactions being overly influenced by the parental mentoring relationship described by Heinrich (1995). If such a relationship did in fact govern our working together, I was unaware of it. More likely, what I do see as being uppermost on my mind was a concern that we both maintain a degree of autonomy and interdependence while staying connected. This relationship, as Johnsrud (1991) implies, is the more difficult one to achieve. And, whether we truly achieved a level of interdependence is open to debate.

On the one hand, I think we did. That is, I believe each of us in our own way fulfilled for the other what Johnsrud (1991) calls "the yearning for connectedness and the yearning for identity...[that is], is to be connected and not subsumed, and to be autonomous and not alone" (p. 15). For example, I worked hard to maintain my sense of what it means to be a "good mentor"–an identity issue for me that is strongly influenced by the positive relationship I continue to maintain with Hal Herber, my mentor from my days at Syracuse as a doctoral student in

reading and language arts. At the same time, I tried hard not to let my image of the "good mentor" get in the way of Josephine's needs as an individual. I valued our ability to work together on previous projects at the National Reading Research Center, and I wanted our unstated sense of connectedness to weather any storm that might present itself at the proposal-writing stage.

On the other hand, I am not sure that we did establish a fully interdependent working relationship. As Johnsrud (1991) notes, "the norms of the traditional academy are skewed in favor of individual achievement" (p. 15). It was difficult, therefore, to know sometimes when I was doing things that were in Josephine's best interests or mine. For example, when I suggested that she forego a weekend soccer tournament to revise sections of her proposal, was I putting my interests ahead of Josephine's? In the end, the question is moot given that Josephine decided to attend the soccer tournament for one day, but not the three she had originally planned. Ultimately, we avoided any collision in interests and managed to stay the course. In this sense, then, I suppose we did move in the direction of interdependency.

Postscript by Josephine

We did manage to avoid any collisions in interests and stayed on course. Like Donna, I believe that our relationship has moved in the direction of interdependency. Perhaps, our relationship took a step away from interdependency and then moved back toward it during the process of writing my prospectus. I felt more dependent on her to guide me through that process than I had been at any other time as a doctoral student. Like Johnsrud (1991), I came to know first hand that the nature of the preliminary exams and the writing of the prospectus required me to be immersed in intellectual work. This was not a time in which I could easily balance the situational, institutional, and societal contexts of my life. My proclivity to procrastinate when I feel overwhelmed or lacking in confidence became evident to Donna as she read my journal in preparation for writing the ARF paper. Her interactions with me changed significantly to accommodate a perceived need for me as a student–prescriptive guidance about how to manage my time in order to meet a deadline I had set.

Of course, the conversation represented above exposes only a small part of our mentoring relationship. There were other e-mail messages and face-to-face encounters during the process of writing my prospectus in which we talked about theory and methodological issues. During these exchanges, I felt our more interdependent relationship continue to grow. This relationship began at the National Reading Research

Center as we read and discussed research and theoretical literature, sorted data, and shared first drafts with one another.

Another aspect of our mentoring relationship that we alluded to in this paper is our friendship. Heinrich (1995) described some woman-to-woman mentoring relationships as something akin to professional friendships. Within these professional friendships, advisors and advisees in her study sought to develop relations in which personal power was shared and negotiated and structured power was dealt with effectively, not ignored or discredited. Our friendship, much like the professional friendships described by Heinrich, was built on shared and negotiated power. This sort of negotiated power allowed me to make a decision such as attending a soccer game and to know that Donna would respect it. It also allowed Donna to give me the personal advice that she so rarely had given to me in the past. As friends, Donna and I were able to speak the truth to each other and stay connected through a very intense period in our mentoring relationship.

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Storytelling to Promote Emergent Literacy: Prospective Teachers' Storytelling Experiences and Expectations

Reed Mottley, Richard Telfer

Goals 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 1993) stresses the importance of students coming to school prepared to learn. Advocates of storytelling (Green, 1996; Gillard, 1996; Livo, 1983; Peck, 1989; Williams, 1991) see storytelling as an instructional strategy that can play a major role in preparing students to learn, both prior to their entering school and once they've begun formal schooling. They suggest that storytelling helps students better understand oral language, which can also lead to greater facility with written language. These authors further propose that storytelling helps students internalize a sense of story, which then serves as a foundation upon which to build their subsequent learning.

Little is known about the experiences that teachers or those preparing to become teachers have had with storytelling. If storytelling is to be used widely and effectively by teachers, efforts must be undertaken to ensure that they are suitably prepared.

Specifically, this study asks prospective teachers, elementary education majors at approximately the junior level who are taking their first reading/literacy courses, to respond to a series of questions about their background, expectations, and concerns relating to storytelling. These prospective teachers can give some insight into what might need to be done to encourage greater use of storytelling.

Objectives

This research looks at the experiences prospective teachers have had with storytelling, as well as their expectations related to the role of storytelling in promoting literacy. Specifically, the study is designed to address the following three goals:

1. To examine prospective teachers' experiences with storytelling as storytellers and as audience members.

2. To examine prospective teachers' knowledge of the effects of storytelling on literacy development in children.

3. To examine prospective teachers' needs and concerns as potential storytellers.

Perspectives or Theoretical Framework

In the last two decades, much has been written about the value of reading aloud to children, both at home and at school. Parents and teachers alike have been encouraged to read to children. This recommendation received a considerable boost with the popular success of Trelease's read aloud handbooks (1982, 1989). Trelease and others (e.g., Heath, 1982; Hicks, 1990; Peck, 1989) have emphasized the effects of reading aloud on both language development and comprehension.

Storytelling in many ways resembles reading aloud to children. Consequently, storytelling has many of the same literacy-related benefits. These benefits range from improved general language facility to improved listening and reading comprehension. They also include elevated critical and creative thinking, as well as more active learning. Additionally, storytelling may improve understanding of culture, both one's own and that of others.

Isbell (1979) and Raines and Isbell (1994) focused specifically on the role of storytelling in fostering children's language development. Isbell investigated the differences or effects of two modes of literature presentation on oral language development of young children. The two modes consisted of reading aloud and storytelling. Students who were told stories could retell more accurately. Students' oral language was more descriptive in retellings that followed storytelling. Vocabulary used in retelling was more diversified when engaged in storytelling. Students' communication units were longer following storytelling. Students when retelling during storytelling sessions used more conventional story parts: beginning, ending, characters, sequencing of plot, and so forth. Raines and Isbell suggested that television, computer games, and movies thwart visual imaging compared to storytelling and reading aloud.

Others have also found that storytelling leads to enhanced language development. Bellon (1975) noted that storytelling encourages vocabulary development and increases facility with language forms. Students who tell and retell stories experience significant improvement in language development (Farrell, 1991).

Storytelling helps improve listening and reading comprehension. Greene (1991) noted that storytelling improves listening skills, which are directly linked to reading achievement. Applebee (1978) observed that storytelling, the first and fundamental language experience, enhances retention of information. Delano (1977) found that storytelling improves language comprehension.

Storytelling also improves creative thinking skills. Farrell suggests that this is done by engaging the listener in a dynamic and richly textured imaginative experience.

Storytelling leads to improved involvement, interaction, and participation. Sutton (1983) noted that oral storytelling involves the listener as an active co-creator and offers opportunities for creative peership. Similarly, Livo (1983) commented that storytelling improves cooperative skills through cognitive interaction between the teller and listeners. Mottley (1995) indicated that storytelling will do for people of all ages what reading aloud does, including serving as a catalyst for motivating students to read.

Finally, storytelling has definite benefits related to family and culture. Not only does oral storytelling, more than any other medium, create and preserve culture (Hamilton & Weiss, 1991), it also teaches appreciation for cultural diversity (Bryan, 1990). As Livo (1983) reported, oral storytelling brings together listeners of all ages. And, as Mottley (1994) noted, storytelling shared in the home enhances family bonding, which is pertinent to developing self-esteem and emergent literacy skills.

Methods

In this study, 106 undergraduate elementary education majors (at one Midwestern and one Southern university) responded to a three-part questionnaire about storytelling. These prospective teachers were primarily juniors, taking their first reading methods course.

The questionnaire was developed based on statements and observations found in the review of literature. Statements of published professional opinion as well as statements of research findings were developed into items intended to elicit information from the prospective teachers.

The first part of the questionnaire addressed the respondents' personal experiences with storytelling, both as individuals who listened to stories and as storytellers. The questions looked at whether the prospective teachers had been exposed to storytelling and at the nature of those storytelling experiences. Questions required respondents to indicate "yes" or "no," choose one best response, choose all applicable responses, or supply an answer.

The second part focused on the respondent's understanding of the role of storytelling in fostering the language development of children during the early childhood years (birth to approximately age eight). Questions required respondents to indicate "yes" or "no," choose one (or more) best response, or respond to a series of statements according to a five-point Likert-type scale.

The third part asked the prospective teachers to identify their needs and concerns as potential storytellers. This section contained three basic questions: (a) How do I choose stories to tell? (b) How can I learn to be an effective storyteller? and (c) What educational purpose does storytelling serve? Prospective teachers were asked to indicate whether each question was of concern and to explain their responses.

Data Analysis and Results

The prospective teachers in this study were asked to provide some brief demographic information and then respond to the various items on the questionnaire. The questionnaire (see appendix) was divided into three major parts focusing on (a) the prospective teachers' personal experiences with storytelling, (b) their understanding of the role of storytelling in fostering language development, and (c) their perceived needs and concerns as potential storytellers.

Demographic Information

The prospective teachers in the study were predominately female (91%). Seventy-five percent of the respondents were white and 11% black; 14% did not indicate ethnicity. Sixty-two percent of the prospective teachers' mothers and 55% of their fathers had not attended college.

Personal Experiences with Storytelling

In general, the prospective teachers in this study could remember a variety of experiences with storytelling. Responses to Questions 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are shown in Table 1. As can be seen, for each of these questions more than three-quarters of the prospective teachers responded "yes."

Table 1

Percentages of Prospective Teachers With Various Storytelling Experiences

Experience	Percentage Responding "Yes"
Were told stories in the home (Question 1)	92.4
Were told stories outside the home (Question 2)	89.5
Asked that stories be retold (Question 9)	88.7
Retold stories themselves (Question 10)	86.0
Told stories as part of a group (Question 11)	76.2
Can remember stories that were told (Question 12)	76.2

When stories were told in the home, most often they were told by the individual's mother. Perhaps surprisingly, about the same number of respondents mentioned grandparents as mentioned fathers as storytellers. Outside the home, teachers were clearly the most likely storytellers. In addition, a sizable number of respondents recalled being told stories by church group leaders and librarians (see Table 2).

Table 2

Most Common Storytellers Inside or Outside the Home

In Home		Outside Home	
Storyteller	Percentage of Respondents	Storyteller	Percentage of Respondents
Mother	79.2	Teachers	83.0
Grandparent	50.9	Church group leaders	50.9
Father	46.2	Librarians	42.5
Older sibling	25.5	Community group leaders	24.5
Other	12.3	Other	17.9

The prospective teachers in this study recall being told stories at young ages (Question 3), with 79% of the respondents remembering being told a story at least by age five. Most of them recall being told a story recently (Question 4); on average their response when asked to identify the oldest age at which they can recall being told a story was 22. Most of these stories were told by professors or teachers (72%) or relatives(25%). They also indicated that they themselves had told stories (Question 13) recently (55% within the past week and 78% within the past month).

The stories were told in a variety of situations (Question 7). Most commonly they were told at bedtime or on special occasions. Table 3 displays these responses. The storytelling generally lasted 15 minutes or less (Question 8), with 77% of the respondents indicating that storytelling sessions lasted about 10 or 15 minutes. The prospective teachers also remembered being told stories often (Question 6). Over 70% of the respondents were told stories at least once a week, with 56% hearing stories even more often.

Table 3

When Were Stories Told?

Situation	Percentage of Respondents
At bedtime	66.0
On special occasions	54.7
As an inducement	18.9
At a set story time	17.9
As a reward	9.4

Two questions were used to learn about the types of stories that were told (see Table 4). First, Question 5 asked prospective teachers to select from a list of possibilities the types of stories that they had been told. Prospective teachers most often selected fairy tales, family stories, or "book" stories. Many of the respondents identified several types of stories. Second, Question 12 asked prospective teachers to supply stories or story themes where they remembered the specific content of the story. The specific stories or themes recalled by prospective

teachers varied, with family stories, book titles/authors, and fairy tales/nursery rhymes mentioned most often. While similar types of stories/themes were recalled, the different percentages in the responses to the two questions may relate to the types of questions.

Table 4

Types of Stories Remembered by Prospective Teachers

Types of Stories Selected		Types and Themes Recalled	
Type of Story	Percentage of Respondents	Story or Theme	Percentage of Respondents
Traditional fairy tales	66.0	Family stories	23.6
Family stories or legends	65.1	Book titles/authors	21.7
Retold authored "Book" stories	60.4	Fairy tales/Nursery Rhymes	19.8
Tall tales	45.3	Stories about events	8.5
Fables or myths	40.6	Ghost stories	7.5
Ghost stories	40.6	Stories with morals/lessons	5.7
Parables	37.7	Stores about people	4.5
Sport stories	16.4	Religious stories	4.5

Prospective teachers were asked to indicate whether they had been in classes when a story was used in a subject area or to teach a particular lesson (Questions 14 & 15). Four subject areas were supplied and respondents were also allowed to indicate that storytelling was used in areas beyond those four. The most common single area noted was social studies, with the other specified areas identified by equivalent numbers of respondents (see Table 5). The respondents generally had been taught the indicated lessons through storytelling, with each of the four lessons mentioned by one-half or more of the respondents. And only 8.5% of the respondents indicated that they had been taught none of these lessons through storytelling.

Table 5

Respondents Indicating Use of Storytelling to Teach a Subject or a Lesson

To Teach a Subject		To Teach a Lesson	
Subject Area	Percentage of Respondents	Lesson	Percentage of Respondents
Social studies	67.9	Other ethnic cultures	67.0
Mathematics	39.6	The environment	62.3
Music	37.0	Healing (death, divorce)	55.7
Science	34.0	Peace (& sense of community)	50.0
Other	54.7	None of the above	8.5

The Role of Storytelling in Fostering Language Development

Several items (Part II, Questions 1-4) addressed the possible effects of storytelling. In terms of fostering imagination, storytelling was seen as second to reading books. Listening to stories was seen as having the strongest impact in the other three areas: (a) language acquisition, (b) family bonding and self-concept, and (c) preserving and transmitting culture. The responses are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6

Relative Impact of Storytelling and Several Other Activities

Fostering Imagination		Promoting Language Acquisition	
Entertainment Type	Percentage of Respondents	Communication Type	Percentage of Respondents
Books that are read	54.7	Listening to stories	47.6
Stories that are told	37.9	Being read to	44.7

Television	3.2	Watching (educational) television	6.8
Movies or film	3.2	Reading books at own reading level	1.0
Computers or multimedia	1.1		

Developing Family Bonding/Self Concept		Preserving and Transmitting Culture	
Activity	Percentage of Respondents	Activity	Percentage of Respondents
Listening to stories	57.1	Listening to traditional and family stories	71.4
Being read to by adults	39.0	Being read to by adults	17.1
Reading about problems similar to your own	3.8	Reading patriotic books and plays	5.7
		Viewing movies about your ethnic background	5.7

Most of the prospective teachers see children's reading comprehension lagging behind their listening comprehension (Part II, Question 5). More than 74% see listening comprehension as greater, with about 15% seeing reading and listening comprehension as about the same.

Similarly, almost 89% of the prospective teachers see retelling of stories as having a positive effect on comprehension scores (Part II, Question 6). At the same time (Part II, Questions 7 & 8), most prospective teachers acknowledge both that some students can read far beyond the level of the story that they can tell (55%) and that some poor readers are excellent storytellers (95%). When asked to identify the five most likely benefits from storytelling (Part II, Question 9), the most frequently selected items were (a) develops students' language, concepts, and experiences and (b) develops effective listening skills (see Table 7).

Table 7

Most Likely Benefits from Storytelling

Benefit	Percentage of Respondents
Develops language, concepts, and experience	84.0
Develops effective listening skills	82.1
Develops oral and written expression	64.2
Develops critical listening skills	58.5
Helps students assimilate language and structure of stories	57.5
Develops a sense of story	52.8
Helps students take a perspective	48.1
Helps students' vocalization	36.8

The prospective teachers were also asked to respond to a series of statements about stories and storytelling (Part II, Question 10) using a Likert-type scale, with "1" indicating that they strongly disagreed and "5" indicating that they strongly agreed with the statement. The items and the average responses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Mean Responses to Fourteen Statements About Stories and Storytelling

Item	Mean Response
1. Students vary markedly in their ability to tell stories.	4.34
2. All students can tell stories.	3.59
3. Children from some cultural groups are better storytellers than are children from other cultural groups.	3.43

4.	Children from cultural groups may produce different types of stories than those produced by children from other cultural groups.	4.60
5.	Low-income African-American children bring to the first grade classroom narrative skills that are as sophisticated as those of mainstream white children.	2.94
6.	Socio-dramatic play is likely to be a precursor to oral storytelling.	3.68
7.	Storytelling by the teacher is more beneficial for improving language development than is storytelling by children.	2.51
8.	By age 5, children generally can tell entertaining stories that contain most components specified by story grammar.	3.50
9.	Storytelling should be done primarily by children age five or older.	1.81
10.	The ability to tell a coherent narrative predicts successful adaptation to school literacy.	3.11
11.	There is a strong relationship between narrative comprehension and the ability to define words.	3.78
12.	The process of developing expectations of print does not come automatically to all children.	3.89
13.	Telling stories (about what happened in school) allows features from a secondary discourse to be transferred into a child's primary discourse.	3.81
14.	The process of literacy socialization is shown to be organized around the children's own experiences.	4.17

Only three items received an average rating of more than 4.00: Items 1, 4, and 14. The items addressed the following: Item 1 students vary in their ability to tell stories, Item 4 students from different cultural groups may produce different types of stories, and Item 14 literacy socialization is organized around a child's experiences.

Only one item, Item 9, had an average score less than 2.00, indicating disagreement with the statement that storytelling should be done primarily by children age five or older. Two other items, Items 5 and 7, had scores below 3.00, while Item 10 had a score just above that mark. The rest of the scores were in the middle range, from 3.43 to 3.89, indicating that the respondents tended to agree with the statements.

Perceived Needs and Concerns as Storytellers

The prospective teachers identified the three questions in Part III as of concern to them, with more than 90% of the respondents rating each question as being of concern. The explanations for each question were then read and grouped into categories of responses.

Ninety-three percent of the prospective teachers said that knowing how to choose stories to tell was of concern to them. The three most common responses (see Table 9), contributed by more than 20% of the respondents, addressed the stories' interest, the appropriateness of the stories, and the connection between the stories and the teachers' instructional objectives. The responses here were often phrased as explanations of how the prospective teacher expects to choose stories.

Table 9

Prospective Teachers' Explanations of How to Choose Stories to Tell

Explanation	Percentage of Respondents
I pick stories that are interesting to me and the children.	37.0
I pick stories that are appropriate for the children.	22.6
I pick stories that fit my objectives.	22.6
I pick stories that are of concern to me.	12.2
I pick stores that I like.	6.6
I pick stories with which students can identify.	4.7
Other	10.4

Learning how to be an effective storyteller was of concern to 90% of the prospective teachers. The responses included specific suggestions for how to learn storytelling (keep listeners involved), as well as general suggestions (simply learn to be a good storyteller). The most common responses (see Table 10) involved keeping listeners involved and generally learning to be a good storyteller.

Table 10

Prospective Teachers' Explanations of How to Learn to be an Effective Storyteller

Explanation	Percentage of Respondents
Simply learn to be a good storyteller	21.7
Keep the children/listeners involved	20.8
Observe expert storytellers	10.4
Work to improve (storytelling)	10.4
Learn how to present (a story)	8.5
Other	11.3

Understanding the educational purpose of storytelling was of concern to 95% of the prospective teachers. The three most common responses (see Table 11), ranging from 24.5% to 15.1% of the respondents, addressed building listening, language, and understanding; mentioned storytelling's large educational role; and noted storytelling's part in helping students learn to read and write. The responses here tended to explain storytelling's educational purpose rather than explain why this is of concern to the prospective teachers.

Table 11

Prospective Teachers' Explanation of Educational Purposes of Storytelling

Explanation	Percentage of Respondents
Helps build listening, language, and understanding	24.5
Plays a large role (unspecific)	19.8
Helps children learn to read and write	15.1
I'm not sure	13.2
Has a general classroom use	7.5
Gets children excited	4.7
Other	11.3

Discussion

This investigation looked at prospective teachers' experiences and expectations regarding storytelling. The study centered in three areas: (a) experiences prospective teachers have had with storytelling, (b) understandings of the effects of storytelling on language development, and (c) their needs and concerns as potential storytellers.

The results of the study indicate that most of the prospective teachers remember being involved with storytelling since they were very young. This involvement seems to have been fairly extensive and it seems to have made a lasting impression on them. The prospective teachers also indicated that they have had recent exposure to storytelling, as listeners and as tellers.

Generally, the prospective teachers recognize storytelling as having considerable value as a means of promoting language development. They identify storytelling as likely to have an important impact on developing a child's understanding of language and imagination, as well as on improving the child's self concept. They also see storytelling as playing a significant role in transmitting culture and in helping understand different cultures.

The prospective teachers indicate that they need to know more about how to choose stories, how to tell stories effectively, and the educational purposes of storytelling. At the same time, they have definite opinions related to those issues.

Although exposure to storytelling seems to have been a common experience and there seems to be general consensus about the value of storytelling, the study shows evidence of some differences in understanding of what is meant by a "story." While respondents generally accept that children from different cultural groups are likely to produce different types of stories (Table 8, Item 4), they aren't sure whether to reject the idea that sophistication in narrative skills is related to income or race (Item 5). This finding is similar to that identified by Gee (1990) who noted that teachers viewed stories told by children from non-mainstream groups as inferior when they did not match the teacher's expectations for a story.

Implications

The prospective teachers in this study seem to be in general agreement about the value of storytelling. They also seem to feel a need to learn more about storytelling, particularly if they are going to use it as part of their instruction. We, as educators, can work to provide more opportunities to use storytelling in our teaching and to help prospective teachers learn more about stories and storytelling.

There appears to be a need to provide experience for prospective teachers, and their students, with stories from various cultural backgrounds. Teachers and students need to understand that stories from different cultures may have different structures and may place different demands upon the tellers and the listeners. Storytelling can be a particularly effective tool for helping us understand different cultures. Stories give us the opportunity to experience aspects of another culture vicariously, but to do so we must work to not be limited by our own definition of "story."

Storytelling can become a more important part of our preparation of teachers and ultimately a part of their teaching. Recognizing the receptivity of prospective teachers to storytelling as well as their concerns can help us provide more effective instruction forthem. This increased emphasis on storytelling can then lead to increased use of storytelling in classrooms.

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Appendix

Appendix
Storytelling Questionnaire

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female Ethnicity (optional): _____

Mother's Educational Level: _____

Father's Educational Level: _____

Part I: Personal Experiences with Storytelling: Remembrances

1. When you were a child, were you told stories in the home?
   ☐ yes ☐ no
   If you marked yes, who told these stories to you? Please mark all that apply.
   ☐ mother ☐ older sibling ☐ other
   ☐ father ☐ grandparent

2. When you were a child, were you told stories outside of the home?
   ☐ yes ☐ no
   If you marked yes, who told you these stories? Please mark all that apply.
   ☐ teachers ☐ librarians
   ☐ church youth leaders ☐ others
   ☐ community group leaders (scouts, rainbows, etc.)

3. What is the youngest age at which you can recall being told a story? Check only one response.
   ☐ age 2 or younger ☐ age 4 ☐ older than age 5
   ☐ age 3 ☐ age 5

4. What is the oldest age at which you can recall being told or listening to a story?
   _____ years of age
   Who told you this story? _____

5. The stories that you heard and remember would be characterized as which of the following? Please mark all that apply.
   ☐ family stories or legends ☐ fables or myths
   ☐ retold authored "book" stories ☐ traditional fairy tales
   ☐ sport stories ☐ ghost stories
   ☐ parables ☐ tall tales

6. How often were stories usually told to you? Please check only one response.

☐ daily ☐ several times a week

☐ once a week ☐ only occasionally or on a special occasion

7. When were the stories told to you? Please check all that apply.

☐ at bedtime

☐ at a set story time

☐ as a reward (for conduct or behavior that pleased)

☐ as an inducement (to do what someone else wanted)

☐ on special occasions

8. When you were listening to stories, how long did each "telling" last? Please check only one response.

☐ 5 minutes or less ☐ 15 minutes or less

☐ 10 minutes or less ☐ more than 15 minutes

9. Did you ask that "favorite" stories be retold?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not applicable

10. Did you retell stories, that you had heard, to others?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not applicable

11. As part of a group (scouts, rainbows, campfire, etc.), were stories told and retold?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not applicable

12. Can you remember the content of stories that you heard in your youth?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not applicable

If the response to item #12 was "yes", please list one or two of the stories that you can recall or provide the theme for those remembered.

_____

_____

13. When was the last time that you told a story or tale? Please check only one response.

☐ in the last week ☐ in the last six months

☐ in the last month ☐ in the last year

14. I have been in a class when a story was told to teach a _____ lesson. Check all that ap

- ☐ social studies
- ☐ math
- ☐ other
- ☐ science
- ☐ music

15. I have been in a class when a story was told to teach about: Check all that apr

- ☐ peace (and a sense of community)
- ☐ the environment (a sense of community)
- ☐ healing (death, divorce)
- ☐ other ethnic cultures
- ☐ none of the above that I can recall

Part II. The Role of Storytelling

1. Which of the following forms of entertainment provides the greatest opportunity for yc imagination to work? Please check only one response.

- ☐ television
- ☐ movies or film
- ☐ computer, multimedia presentations
- ☐ books that are read
- ☐ stories that are heard

2. In your opinion, which form of language communication would most impact language acquisition of young children? Please check only one response.

- ☐ television (Sesame Street, Zebra Wings, etc.)
- ☐ being read to by an adult
- ☐ listening to stories in the home, preschool, school
- ☐ reading books at your reading level

3. In your opinion, which form of language best brings about family bonding and development of self-concept? Please check only one response.

- ☐ being read to by adults
- ☐ listening to traditional and family stories
- ☐ reading about problems similar

4. In your opinion, which form of language best preserves and transmits your culture? P check only one response.

- ☐ patriotic books and plays
- ☐ traditional and family stories
- ☐ being read aloud to by adults
- ☐ viewing movies about my ethnic background

5. A child's independent reading comprehension level compared to his/her listening comprehension is usually

- ☐ about the same
- ☐ lagging behind
- ☐ greater

6. Children's retelling of stories affects comprehension scores

- ☐ in a significantly positive manner
- ☐ about the same as no retelling
- ☐ in a negative manner

7. Some students can read far beyond the level of the story they can tell orally.

☐ yes ☐ no

8. Some poor readers are excellent storytellers.

☐ yes ☐ no

9. Which five of the following items are the most likely benefits from storytelling in your opinion. Please mark only five items.

- ☐ Storytelling helps students develop effective listening skills.
- ☐ Storytelling helps students develop critical listening skills.
- ☐ Storytelling helps students develop oral and written expression.
- ☐ Storytelling helps students develop a sense of story.
- ☐ Storytelling helps students assimilate the language and structure of stories.
- ☐ Storytelling helps students' vocalization.
- ☐ Storytelling helps develop students' language, concepts, and experiences.
- ☐ Storytelling helps students take a perspective.

10. Please respond to the following items by marking on a scale from one (1) to five (5), w one (1) indicating that you strongly disagree with the statement and five (5) indicating t you strongly agree with the statement.

_____Students vary markedly in their ability to tell stories.	1 2 3 4 5
_____All students can tell stories.	1 2 3 4 5
_____Children from some cultural groups are better storytellers than are students from other cultural groups.	1 2 3 4 5
_____Children from cultural groups may produce different types of stories than those produced by children from other cultural groups.	1 2 3 4 5
_____Low-income African-American children bring to the first grade classroom narrative skills that are as sophisticated as those of mainstream white children.	1 2 3 4 5
_____20 play is likely to be a precursor to oral storytelling.	1 2 3 4 5
_____Storytelling by the teacher is more beneficial for improving language development than is storytelling by children.	1 2 3 4 5
_____By age 5, children generally can tell entertaining stories that contain most components specified in story grammar.	1 2 3 4 5
_____Storytelling should be done primarily by children age five or older.	1 2 3 4 5
_____The ability to tell a coherent narrative predicts successful adaptation to school literacy.	1 2 3 4 5
_____There is a strong relationship between narrative comprehension and the ability to define words.	1 2 3 4 5
_____The process of developing expectations of print does not come automatically to all children.	1 2 3 4 5
_____Telling stories (about what happened in school) allows features from a secondary discourse to be transferred into a child's primary discourse.	1 2 3 4 5
_____The process of literacy socialization is shown to be organized around the children's own experiences.	1 2 3 4 5

Part III: Your Needs and Concerns as Potential Storytellers
Please respond to the following by first indicating whether the area is of concern to you and second by giving a brief explanation:

1. How do I choose stories to tell?

☐ Of concern to me

☐ Not of concern to me

Briefly explain.

2. How can I learn to be an effective storyteller?

☐ Of concern to me

☐ Not of concern to me

Briefly explain.

3. What educational purpose does storytelling serve?

☐ Of concern to me

☐ Not of concern to me

Briefly explain.

Reflective Retelling: Perceptions of Preservice Teachers and Implications for Instruction

Marie F. Doan Holbein, Jane Brady Matanzo

Melinda: The children wanted to see if the teacher slept in school. The teacher's name was Mrs. Marsh and the kids were Molly and Gary.

Carl: Were there any more children?

Melinda: Yes, but I can't remember their names.

This exchange between Carl and Melinda represents a number of retelling episodes which occurred during a reading methods course field experience for preservice teachers. Two university professors developed and incorporated a model into their reading methods course for training preservice teachers in the use of retelling as an assessment tool and a teaching strategy. The preservice teachers used guided responses to explore the children's comprehension of elements of story structure. Questions such as "Were there any more children?", "What happened?", and "Is that the end?" helped the children to focus upon time, plot, setting, characters, problems, resolutions, story beginning, and story ending (Gipe, 1995; Graves, Watts, & Graves, 1994; Ollia & Mayfield, 1992; Searfoss & Readence, 1994).

Theoretical Framework for the Model

Research suggests that retelling is an effective teaching and assessment tool for improving comprehension of story structure (Gambrell,

Pfeiffer, & Wilson, 1985; Morrow, 1985b). Retelling facilitates general comprehension, literal and interpretive reasoning, and listening skills (Graves et a., 1994; Gunning, 1996; Mason & Au, 1990; May, 1990). As a teaching strategy, retelling enhances retention by allowing children to translate into their own words and experiences the meaning they derive from text (Mason & Au, 1990; Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1995; Valencia, Hiebert & Afflerbach, 1994). As an assessment technique, retelling offers valuable insight into children's language development, their use of decoding strategies, and their interest in reading, (Brown & Cambourne, 1987: Gunning, 1996; May, 1990; Ollila & Mayfield, 1992; Searfoss & Readence, 1994; Valencia et al., 1994).

Children select, organize, summarize, and paraphrase information when they retell from narrative or expository text. As the level of their comfort with the text grows, children develop confidence in both their reading and speaking abilities (Brown & Cambourne, 1987). Morrow (1985b) noted in her study of kindergartners that children had difficulty recalling beginnings, endings, and sequences of events during retelling. Many children did not even appear to know how to engage in a retelling. She suggests that children be given opportunities to practice with guided retellings which focus upon elements of story structure (Morrow, 1985a).

Responses to both guided and unguided retellings may be documented and analyzed with verbatim transcriptions, checklists, point systems, or rubrics (Gipe, 1995; Gunning, 1996; Miller, 1995; Tierney et al., 1995; Valencia et al., 1994). Tierney et al suggest that rubrics can be constructed to elicit the following information: (a) generalizations beyond text; (b) summarizing statements; (c) major ideas and supporting details; (d) supplementations; and (e) coherence, completeness, and comprehensibility (p. 518).

Given the opportunity to practice retelling regularly with guided prompting, children appear to grow in their ability to develop and retain information related to a sense of story structure. The apparent transfer of the cognitive strategies used for comprehension during a retelling to the "reading of subsequent text" is an added benefit (Gambrell et al.,, 1985, p. 219).

Description of the Reading Methods Course Retelling Model

The initial phase of the model occurred in the university classroom where preservice teachers developed their skills in administering and interpreting an informal reading inventory. They viewed a video of an inventory session and engaged in trial administrations using taped recordings of children reading from the *Basic Reading Inventory* (Johns,

1994). Preservice teachers supported each other by sharing and discussing their experiences as they explored the various techniques for the effective administration of reading inventories. Using retelling for measuring comprehension was one such technique.

The second phase of the model focused upon an actual case study of one particular child who was assigned to each of the preservice teachers. The basis for the case study consisted of administering the *John's Informal Reading Inventory* where retelling was used to measure oral and silent comprehension and developing retelling strategy lessons.

Throughout the term, preservice teachers and the university professors held information conferences to discuss the retelling experiences with the children. In phase three of the course, the preservice teachers responded in writing to a questionnaire that posed questions regarding the importance of retelling. They shared their perceptions of levels of comfort for themselves and their children during retelling. The preservice teachers also offered suggestions for preparing children for retelling, and proposed methods for assessing comprehension from retelling.

A case study example. Carl and Melinda are fictional names for actual participants who represented 36 preservice teachers and their assigned children in the project. Their interaction typifies that of most of the pairs of preservice teachers and their assigned children and serves as a model for discussion. All of the children who participated were in grades 3 to 5.

Melinda's instructional reading level as derived from the Informal Reading Inventory was determined to be between first and second grade. Carl further assessed Melinda's comprehension of the passages in the inventory by having her retell passages as suggested in the inventory. Carl asked Melinda to read and retell the story, *My Teacher Sleeps at School,* (Weiss, 1984) and he recorded Melinda's retelling with a verbatim transcript. The *Story (Book) Retelling Ability Checklist* (Miller, 1995) was used to record the elements of story structure derived from the session. Information recorded using this checklist highlighted the following elements of narrative: setting, theme, plot episodes, resolution, and sequence (copies of the transcript and the checklist are available upon request).

The checklist included instructions for calculating a numerical index in order to compare Melinda's earned score to a best possible score of 10 points. The points were assigned for each element included

in the retelling. For example, one point was allocated when the student began the story which implied or stated the setting, and one point also was given for each plot episode recalled. Ratios were used to describe the relationship between earned points and possible points for recalling the number of plot episodes and characters in the story. Total scores, therefore, sometimes included decimals.

After recording Melinda's retelling, Carl determined that Melinda had not recalled all of the characters in the story nor the total number of plot episodes.

She also had difficulty retelling the story in proper sequence, thus reducing her score from a total possible of 10 to 8.1 points. Carl's subjective observations regarding Melinda's demeanor during the retelling were favorable and indicated that she enjoyed the activity. He remarked that Melinda gained proficiency in relating details and sequencing events as the story unfolded.

Carl commented in a conference with his university professor that it was difficult to avoid giving sequence clues during prompting when he asked questions such as "What happened next?" Melinda's imprecise reporting of sequences led to inaccurate perceptions regarding cause and effect. Carl was concerned that his prompting was providing Melinda with clues which may have distorted his analysis of her ability to recall events in sequence. He found that Melinda remembered introductory and ending elements of the story with greater facility than those which occurred in the middle of the story. Carl remarked that as Melinda became more familiar with retelling she gained confidence and accuracy. He also reflected that his own experience with the text contributed to his level of comfort with retelling as he worked with Melinda.

Carl suggested practicing retelling with children to help them develop a level of comfort and confidence (Morrow, 1985b). His discomfort with prompting implies that teachers need to be familiar with the content of the passages they ask children to read. More important, teachers need to practice asking thoughtful and probing questions.

Preservice teachers' responses to the questionnaire. Preservice teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire at the conclusion of the methods course. A major purpose of the reflective questionnaire was to enable the professors to discern the preservice teachers' acceptance of retelling as an effective strategy.

The first question asked the preservice teachers to describe the level of comfort exhibited by the children during retelling. Preservice teachers noted that the children's comfort increased as they experienced retelling several selections. Seventy-eight percent of the preservice teachers remarked that their case study children gradually became comfortable, and frequently eager, to retell passages read. The preservice teachers felt that the children were helped if they knew before the selection was read that they would need to retell it. Positive feedback by the listener seemed to be beneficial once the children finished retelling a selection.

The second question addressed the preservice teachers' level of comfort with retelling. The comfort of the preservice teachers increased proportionally to the children's comfort with repeated exposure to the retelling process. Seventy-eight percent of the preservice teachers noted that the children became comfortable and looked forward to retelling. Eighty-eight percent claimed that by the conclusion of their diagnostic assignments in the schools, they had become comfortable with recording and evaluating children's retellings. Six percent expressed a need for additional experiences with retelling. They were apprehensive and uncomfortable because they felt that the children did not like the activity, and they felt the process was too subjective as their findings were not reinforced by any other evaluators. The preservice teachers were insecure with their ability to make prompting decisions.

The third question solicited the preservice teachers' opinions regarding the importance of retelling. Seventy-five percent of the preservice teachers responded that retelling aided comprehension. They supported retelling as an assessment tool and perceived it as a measure that empowered children and respected their thinking and interpretations. The preservice teachers observed that retelling required children to organize main ideas and recall details of the story. They also noted that retelling promoted retention because children had to think about what they read in order to paraphrase the text.

Twenty-five percent of the preservice teachers indicated that "sometimes" retelling is important. They noted that children should only be asked to retell a story if they feel comfortable, regardless of the fact that retelling may aid comprehension. Other "sometimes" responses suggested that retelling be used only if the children's ability to comprehend is in question and the decision to use retelling should depend ultimately on a teacher's decision about each individual child.

The fourth question asked preservice teachers to describe how they would prepare children in their own classrooms for retelling. A

majority of the preservice teachers suggested modeling by the classroom teacher. The second most noted preparation technique was for teachers to practice prompting and questioning with the children.

The fifth question requested preservice teachers to describe how they would evaluate retelling. They suggested checklists with clearly stated expectations and rubrics with a variety of stated criteria which document a range of retelling abilities. Preservice teachers strongly felt that children would be increasingly at ease and successful in their retelling if it could become a daily expectation in the elementary classroom.

Discussion of questionnaire responses. Comfort for both teachers and children seems to be related to practice. One way to ensure practice is for professors to provide opportunities for retelling after assigned readings in methods courses so the preservice teachers can more fully understand the retelling task. Indicating at the beginning of the methods class that retelling will be required might also be helpful. Preservice teachers need to practice giving instructions and evaluating the retelling of several children before they are asked to conduct an entire case study.

Preservice teachers should have the opportunity to practice retelling with at least two peers who will critique the retelling according to a given checklist or rubric. By having two or more preservice teachers listen to a retelling, those evaluating will have the opportunity to compare and discuss ratings. Such cross comparisons should be helpful when the teacher must decide whether the retelling was excellent., satisfactory, or unsatisfactory.

Preservice teachers should be encouraged to read research findings and other professional literature on the impact that retelling has on comprehension, especially as retelling influences retention. Knowledge about retelling research and recommended strategies needs to be emphasized in previous reading and language arts courses.

Preservice teachers should discuss and decide what information should be related in a retelling. Modeling by professors using evaluative tools such as checklists and rubrics for setting expectations in their own courses would expose preservice teachers to the practical applications of these forms of assessment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In general, the perceptions of the preservice teachers in this project indicated that retelling was well accepted and seen as a helpful diagnos-

tic tool to gain specific information on exactly how children comprehended and interpreted a story. On the basis of the preservice teachers' experiences with their case studies, their personal reflections, and their responses to the questionnaire, the following recommendations for refining the use of retelling as an assessment tool and teaching strategy are offered:

1. Model retelling for preservice teachers'
2. Provide opportunities in methods courses for preservice teachers to practice retelling and to evaluate the quality of both their own and peer retellings;
3. Encourage preservice teachers to practice retelling with several children;
4. Make professional literature and research findings pertaining to retelling available to preservice teachers;
5. Encourage the use of retelling across the curriculum for both instructional and diagnostic purposes; and
6. Collaborate with inservice teachers on ways that might use retelling with their children first so preservice teachers might observe the implementation of retelling in actual classrooms.

As cited in the literature, retelling can serve as a window for obtaining a more accurate view of comprehension. Retelling can be used both as an instructional and an assessment tool and should be a component of a preservice teacher's training. An early introduction and a repeated use of retelling in methods courses would help preservice teachers attain an ease with retelling that may encourage them to use this technique on a regular basis in their future classrooms, and also ultimately benefit their children.

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Seeking Readers: Integrating Gay and Lesbian Texts into a Developmental Reading and Writing Course

Michaeline Laine

For reading and writing teachers, the 1990s have posed an interesting paradox. Gays and lesbians are increasingly visible, with student and faculty groups organized in many high schools and colleges and with books and articles by gays and lesbians appearing in many mainstream and university publications. At the same time, however, gay and lesbian organizations have come under fire and, according to the American Library Association (1996), texts by gays and lesbians, or even texts that include gay or lesbian characters in a positive light, constitute the number one target of book banners in public schools. Within our culturally diverse society, there is a need to include gay and lesbian literature into the curriculum. Support comes from Gallo (1994). He reports:

> The characters in the best of today's YA [young adult] literature are realistically portrayed, deal with issues that are more gray than either black or white, face painful realities of contemporary society, such as divorce, abortion, alcoholism, homosexuality, child abuse, physical disabilities, death, corrupt officials, and AIDS, and represent a wider variety of ethnic groups. The reaction from protestors is to demand content that is consistent with their personal worldview, to the exclusion of all other viewpoints. (p. 117)

With the potential volatility of the subject matter in mind, this article provides developmental educators with a pedagogical technique for integrating gay and lesbian texts into a college developmental course.

Setting

I teach in an urban open-access college at a large midwestern university. The Language Arts Department offers a series of paired developmental reading and writing courses that embody the theory that reading and writing are intimately connected. As suggested by Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986), we link all the readings through a single theme, with students' writing becoming additional texts. Gay and lesbian texts, among others, are used to help these developmental learners become readers, writers, and critical thinkers in a culturally diverse society.

Since the student population is culturally diverse, we include readings that exemplify racism, sexism, feminism, and culturalism. Stereotyping and discrimination are uncovered through these readings. For example, an excellent work about racism is Maya Angelou's (1969) *For the Boys*. To develop an understanding of another culture, Jack Shaheen's (1988) *The Media's Image of the Arabs* is used. Our culturally diverse students, typically between 18 and 25, are generally egocentric and homophobic. Through these readings and discussion, we encourage students to reflect on what it feels like to be an insider or an outsider of a group. We encourage them to draw on their personal experiences as they explore these insider and outsider roles. The students' experiences as an insider and/or outsider are the focus of their essays.

Course Design

The writing teacher meets with the students on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for 150 minutes per week. On Mondays and Fridays, students generate, revise, and edit their papers in a writers' workshop format with two in-class tutors and the writing teacher. On Wednesdays, the focus is mini lessons on brainstorming, prewriting, introductions, conclusions, writing mechanics, and/or the conventions of grammar.

The reading teacher meets with students on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 150 minutes per week to discuss the reading passages and develop reading strategies. Vocabulary development, summary writing, and journal writing are also part of the reading class. The journal assignments relate to personal experiences and are not used to check comprehension. The journals are "springboards" for the students' formal papers. The reading teacher also examines thesis, main ideas,

details of support, vocabulary, introductions, conclusions, and figurative language.

Examples of Integration

Several examples may help illustrate how we integrate gay and lesbian texts in the curriculum. My goal in this first example was to help students develop a sensitivity to others within a culture and celebrate cultural diversity rather than fear it. A particularly effective reading was "How I Came Out to My Parents" by Kenneth Kohler (1993). Kohler's personal narrative retells the emotional turmoil and fear that he goes through to inform his parents that he is gay. Kohler wants to tell his parents because he wants to feel loved by his parents, be part of the family unit, and come out to his church.

The students were to read the Kohler text and write a journal response. The journal prompt for this passage was

> Recall a time when you told someone something he or she did not want to hear. Perhaps you had to tell your parents that you wrecked the family car, to persuade a sweetheart that your relationship was over, or to inform a friend or relative that a loved one had died. Free write about five minutes to explain how hard this was (Buscemi, 1993, p. 375).

The journal responses from the prompt varied. One student wrote how difficult it was for her to tell her husband that she and their children were going to move back to her hometown. Another student dealt with her guilt about telling her grandmother that she wanted to move out of her grandmother's home, which meant her grandmother would have to move into a nursing home. Are these students really dealing with Kenneth Kohler's issue of coming out to his parents? No, but that is not the journal assignment. According to Probst (1992):

> Writing 'from' literature, rather than writing 'about' literature, leads students toward two kinds of knowledge: knowledge of self and knowledge of others. It demonstrates to the student the significance of introspection and reflection on one's own values and beliefs, one's own place in the culture, and one's relationships with others. (p. 121)

These students are trying to find their places in the scheme of reading, writing, and thinking.

To foster students' understandings of the reading, I asked them to write in class from an oral prompt. According to Gullette (1992), by having the students write a few sentences on a topic or question, it

implies to the student that the topic is serious and complex. While I took attendance, the students were given this oral prompt: "At the bottom of your journal, write something about the passage such as whether you liked or disliked the passage or questions that you have about the passage."

After the students finished writing and I walked around the room collecting the journals, I quickly read the students' thoughts about the story. The woman wanting to move back to her hometown wrote: "I would have been scared to tell my parents I was gay. I think he had a lot of courage, and his parents took the news well." The woman who wrote about telling her grandmother that she was moving out wrote: "I really liked the story, 'How I Came Out to My Parents.' I don't know how I would accept it if my son told me he was gay." These two students were identifying with Kohler's emotions through introspection and reflection. By their written responses, these two students were being open-minded.

To start the discussion, I informed the students that I was not going to lead the discussion. "I will use the Socratic method, where I will ask a few questions and you lead the discussion. I will act as recorder and write your thoughts and comments on the chalkboard." The discussion proceeded along the normal lines of what is the thesis? What are the major details? And other points of confusion. Eventually, the discussion became more lively and centered on the heart of the issue: Was homosexuality genetic? Inherited? Personal choice? Psychological? Biological?

Finally, a single mom with three children stated, "I don't want a lesbian sitting on my couch." As these words came out of her mouth, the classroom went completely silent. The classroom went silent for several possible reasons. One, the students were shocked that she would admit her feelings, or two, they felt the same thing that she had just said.

During this discussion, the students were dealing with their feelings about gays and lesbians and sharing their emotions with the classroom audience. The discussion led students to vocalize their thoughts. Through the combination of journaling and discussing this culturally sensitive issue, students used their critical thinking and analysis skills. By developing these skills, students are enhancing their reading and writing strategies.

An additional example which demonstrates the importance of the inclusion of gay and lesbian literature in the curriculum relates to another group of very homophobic students. As the students entered

the classroom, they were discussing stickers they had seen strategically placed around campus on walls, door knobs, and/or hand railings. The stickers read: "Someone with AIDS touched this spot." The students were abuzz with this concept and were under the impression that only gays or lesbians could have AIDS. One 18-year-old male student stated, "I would never, ever talk to anybody who was a gay or lesbian person. I would never!"

Since I knew that my developmental writing colleague and this student's writing professor was gay, I used this opportunity to discuss the importance of audience with this student. Britton, Martin, McLeod, and Rosen (1975) addressed the concept of students writing for an internalized audience. This student, as well as all students, needs to be aware of internal and external audiences.

Conclusion

Based upon my experiences as a developmental educator, I believe it is necessary for all educators to consider integrating gay and lesbian texts into their curriculum. As we prepare students for a more culturally diverse society, we need to expose them to literature dealing with racism, sexism, feminism, culturalism, and homophobia. A culturally enriched curriculum may help students develop an awareness of stereotyping and discrimination and aid in survival in a culturally diverse society.

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Empowering Teachers Through A Professional Development School and Classroom Action Research

Joyce C. Fine

Recent presidential and public attention to the importance of students attaining literacy by the end of third grade has validated teacher educators' passion to empower teachers to be instructional leaders in reading. Seeking ways to motivate teachers, our university faculty established a professional development school (PDS) following a philosophy of constructivism and critical theory. Our site-based delivery of master's programs was designed to focus on the empowerment of teachers as change agents. One of the most effective learning experiences that promotes such professional development is classroom action research. Teachers were guided as they took informed action to construct and apply their knowledge experientially with their own students. In this article, I (a) describe a practical model for a beginning graduate reading course in which teachers research strategies to improve their students' reading achievement, (b) share highlights from our experiences, (c) examine problems and challenges, and (d) make suggestions for conducting classroom action research in the future.

This model was developed with more than forty graduate teachers who were beginning master's degrees in elementary education or reading education. Despite the large number of teachers involved, I took this approach because it allowed teachers to construct their own first-hand, concrete, procedural knowledge instead of hoping for them to accept abstract, declarative knowledge from lectures. According to Corey(1953) classroom action research is "research undertaken by the

people who actually teach the children, supervise teachers and administer school systems in an attempt to solve their practical problems by using the methods of science . . . in order that they may know that they are accomplishing the things they hope to accomplish" (p. 141). Corey explained that teachers with the disposition to study and learn from their own teaching are more likely to change and improve their teaching from such experience than from reading about what someone else has discovered.

When teachers were first introduced to the concept of classroom action research so early in their graduate studies, their anxiety levels were high. They needed to learn the difference between empirical research and classroom action research. I explained that the emphasis would be on developing their professional expertise and judgment (Hopkins, 1993) as they explored a published, proven strategy with their students. Classroom action research was a way for teachers to search for ways to improve their effectiveness as teachers. To do this, they first reflected on their beliefs about reading instruction using DeFord's (1985) theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) to gain an appreciation of where they currently were on the continuum from a traditional to a whole language teacher. They needed to become conscious of the relationship between their beliefs and their teaching practices, a crucial link to becoming empowered literacy professionals.

Through class discussion, I estimated where each teacher was on a scale that estimates their use of reading strategies, Levels of Use of An Innovation Model (LOU). The levels range from 0 to 6, with 0 being the least aware and 6 the most. The purpose was for them to advance on the following LOU scale:

Level 0 Non-use: Teachers have little or no knowledge of reading/writing strategies and do not care to learn about them

Level 1 Orientation: Teachers have acquired information about reading/writing strategies and are evaluating their value and usefulness

Level 2 Preparation: Teachers gather information in anticipation of beginning to use reading/writing strategies

Level 3 Mechanical Use: Teachers use the strategies in a mechanical way and are interested more in user needs than the students' needs

Level 4A Routine: Teachers make few changes, use reading/writing strategies to further improve student learning

Level 4B Refinement: Teachers vary the use of the strategies to increase impact on students based on knowledge of both short and long-term consequences of strategy

Level 5 Integration: Teachers have extensive understanding and are willing to help other colleagues learn reading/writing strategies (They look to further improve student learning in a great sphere of influence.)

Level 6 Renewal: Teachers re-evaluate the quality of use of the reading/writing strategies and alters the strategies to achieve greater impact (Look to explore new strategies and set new goals.) (modified from Hall, Loucks, Rutherford, & Newlove, 1975)

All the teachers were approximately at Levels 0, 1 or 2.

Several models of classroom action research have developed from Kurt Lewin's original description (described in Hopkins, 1993) that included analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization, planning execution, more fact-finding or evaluation, and a repetition of this cycle. To tailor this design for a literacy focus, I developed an elaborated model for a one-term class delivery. The students realized that they needed to become a community of teacher researchers who would discuss what they were doing to support each other along the way. We progressed through the steps as follows:

1. Analysis – Defined problems or ways in which they wanted to improve the reading instruction in their classrooms based on a needs assessment of their students and the social context for learning.

2. Fact-finding – Identified and chose strategies that had been documented as beneficial to students.

3. Conceptualization – Reflected in writing on the match between their individual classroom settings and the original researcher's classroom setting.

4. Planning execution – Planned the strategy considering ethics for classroom action research; planned a wish-list budget, if funding were available, from such sources as state

reading associations; planned the assessment making sure that it matched the reasons for selecting the strategy and found three sources to access the data (triangulation of assessment); planned ways to document the process by making a video, including the introduction, each step of the strategy development, and interviews with the students aimed at capturing their response to or evaluation of the strategy; planned ways to disseminate what was learned; wrote a proposal for potential funding, but planned to start without any additional funds.

5. Fact-finding – Sought suggestions and support from the principal, colleagues, and classmates.

6. Revision/Conceptualization – Revised the plan, if needed. This allowed teachers to redirect their work as their thinking evolved.

7. Implementation – Informed students and parents with letters describing what they would be learning and seeking consent for video taping before beginning implementation.

8. Documentation – Kept a professional journal classifying their notes describing participants and events along with interpretations.

9. Dissemination – Shared the experience with fellow teacher researchers, exchanging feedback and giving ongoing formative evaluation; disseminated what was learned in various ways; set new goals.

There were many highlights from this classroom action research project designed as a course for graduate students. One was that the teachers searched and shared excellent resources such as *Reading Strategies and Practices: A compendium* (Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1995) and journals from which they chose documented strategies for implementation. The teachers also became a community of collaborators and supporters rather than competitors within the graduate class as they problem-solved and shared suggestions and materials.

In evaluating the problems identified by the teachers, certain patterns emerged. Most often, the teachers wanted to motivate students. They felt they were unable to get and keep students engaged in work. Several were concerned with ways of creating a positive classroom climate by improving classroom management during reading

and writing or improving students attitudes toward reading and writing. Others spoke of students' lack of experience with literacy due to limited English or due to parents' lack of time or involvement in their children's literacy development. These problems, we believed, were similar to those faced by many educators across the country.

Another point of interest was that the teacher-selected strategies were going to be used for solving a broad spectrum of problems. For instance, Sketch to Skretch (Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988, in Tierney, et al., 1995), a strategy in which students transform events they understood from text into sketches, was used to not only improve comprehension, but to improve students' oral expression, and to instill a love of reading. This helped us appreciate the multitude of benefits of teaching reading strategies for improving student achievement.

Even when teachers had been vague about what needed to be improved, their careful reflection with professional coaching helped them to refine their observations, identify and describe their students' needs, and match them with appropriate instructional strategies. One teacher, for example, said she could not get three students "to make a single written response to a story." After she had reflected on why she had chosen the particular strategy, she explained that she had not been looking just for a response to stories, but a means of getting students to focus on instruction. Once she was able to better observe behaviors and infer the students' cognitive and developmental levels, she was able to deliver more appropriate instruction resulting in the students focusing on and engaging with text and learning to read. Teachers constructed their professional knowledge and applied what they had learned in the classroom. Under a constructivist's framework, their self-constructed knowledge, created while working through the systematic implementation of a strategy, played a key role in improving student learning.

The benefits became apparent. Teachers reported improvement in students' reading behavior as observed through the various selected assessment methods. With the Sketch to Stretch strategy, for instance, student comprehension, oral expression, and attitudes toward reading improved. All reflected on their teaching and were able to motivate students through their systematic approach to teaching using strategies. With classroom success, teacher empowerment was obvious and became a source of motivation in the graduate class as well. Because their students responded very enthusiastically, teachers were encouraged to continue using the strategies. The teachers took ownership of the strategies and were determined to convince other teachers to use them, rising to higher and higher levels on the LOU scale. Some teachers enthusiastically tried other teachers' strategies in their class-

room; some applied strategies in innovative ways, and several planned to continue researching with them.

These benefits were not without cost. The teachers went through emotional ebbs and flows at different points of the process. Elliott (1976) who had directed classroom action researchers with the Ford Teaching Project identified stages and similar situations: (a) analysis, the problem-solving stage; (b) reflection, the stage in which the teacher researcher thinks about what to do to "solve" the problem; (c) the self-evaluation stage, the stage in which most teachers feel the most tension or dissatisfaction; (d) insight, the stage in which they see the progress of their work, working through the conflicts from the self-evaluation; and (e) change, the stage in which the teachers incorporate what they have learned. Several of the teachers in the graduate classes found the difficult stage of self-evaluation extremely stressful. In this stage, the teachers began to question the quality of their teaching. This challenged their professional identity. They wondered, "Have I not been a very good teacher?" At this stage, the teachers began to blame other factors for problems or obstacles. This was a critical time when teachers needed to have open discussion. The teachers had to process their feelings and see that teaching improves with such critical reflection.

As a means of performance evaluation, I had asked the teachers to document the implementation of the strategy. The teachers had either videotaped themselves or asked a colleague to videotape them. On the self-evaluations, teachers revealed that some of them were uncomfortable with seeing themselves on tape or were technophobic, afraid to use the video camera. This was a greater concern than I had anticipated and was probably related to their anxiety over university grades as well. All of the teachers overcame their fear and produced a video, although many tapes were full of blips, blank spaces, and noise interference.

Everyone gained insight from engaging in classroom action research. One suggestion that could improve the experience is to limit the number of teachers involved at one time. A ratio of more than 40 teachers to one university supervisor took a great deal of physical time and effort. Consider fully the feasibility of classroom visits. Another suggestion is to be prepared to deal with high levels of stress during the self-evaluation stage. Students sometimes rebel during the self-reflection stage from their personal discomfort. Teaching is a nurturing profession and teachers, generally, want to believe they have done all they could have for their students. When one threatens professional identity, one has to help teachers verbalize their thoughts and to rationally examine what they are thinking. It is important to explain beforehand that they may likely feel uneasy self-evaluating. Creating

the expectation of stress at a point is better than simply letting it erupt. Teachers are reassured knowing others are feeling the same self-doubts they are. Some individual conferences may be necessary to ease the situation.

To use the video to its greatest benefit, as a visual enhancement for the presentation of the teacher's work, the teachers should develop a list of what they want included in it and a rubric to evaluate it prior to beginning the classroom action research. Allow the teachers to peer evaluate the tapes using the teacher-created rubic. This eliminates much of the anxiety that they will be evaluated on their technical prowess. After they have made the video, ask teachers to sign a release, if they wish, for their tape to be used for teacher training. This empowers teachers to know they have produced a demonstration worth sharing.

In conducting classroom action research as a learning experience at the beginning of a master's degree program, students, teachers, and the university collaborator learned valuable lessons. Students learned many new strategies. Teachers progressed to higher levels on the Levels of Use of an Innovation Model. Teachers eagerly disseminated what they learned from their experience at their schools, some at county-wide coalition meetings and some in their districts. Others presented their strategies at professional conferences on the state and national levels. Some teachers have gained positions in the county as instructional supervisors, some are teaching at research and development schools on the strength of their new level of professional competence, two have won state grants, two were awarded scholarships from the American Reading Forum, and some set the new goal of going on in their career for doctoral study. As the professor, I learned that conducting classroom action research with its positives and its challenges resulted in the empowerment of a new generation of change agents who will surely make an impact on the literacy achievement of students.

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The Perils and Promises of One School/College Partnership

Marilyn G. Eanet

Developing partnerships between teacher education programs and public schools has been strongly advocated by a number of professional groups as an important part of teacher education reform. The Holmes Group (1990), for example, advocates such an arrangement between college and school which it terms a Professional Development School (PDS). A PDS is defined as "a school for the development of novice professionals, for continuing development of experienced professionals and for the research and development of the teaching profession" (p. 1). The need for and desirability of such an arrangement is hard to dispute, yet creating such relationships is not without its challenges. What follows is my account of participating in one college's attempt to initiate such a relationship. I tell the story to highlight both the perils and the promises of this experience.

The Partners

The partnership between Mt. Pleasant High School and Rhode Island College is nearly five years old. I was involved as College Coordinator for this partnership from almost the beginning and served in this capacity for four very intense years. This year, I have had the opportunity to reflect on the experience in hopes of gaining perspective and some useful insights. Let me introduce the partners:

Providence School Department's Mt. Pleasant High School (MPHS) is a culturally diverse urban school of about 1400 students located less than a mile from my campus office, next to the main entrance to Rhode Island College. Although teacher educators in social science education

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were using MPHS as a practicum site and teacher education students in various classes made occasional school observations there, the two institutions had a history of mutual apathy that went back decades. Thus, people at the high school entered the relationship with more than a bit of skepticism; after all, they had been essentially ignored by Rhode Island College for a long time.

Rhode Island College (RIC) is a comprehensive public college with undergraduate programs in liberal arts and sciences and a variety of professional fields and with some graduate programs in related fields. Teacher education has been a mission of the college since its inception in 1854 and continues to be a major focus. While our high school colleagues had reason to be skeptical of the college's intentions and good will, professors and staff members at RIC also had some concerns; the Providence School Department had the reputation of being a difficult district with which to work. It has the reputation of being extremely political, and there is a strong and highly active teacher union. Not unlike many urban areas, the district has been seriously underfunded while at the same time being called on to serve a more and more diverse population. Over 70 languages are represented in the Providence schools. Achievement test scores are low and dropout rates high.

Hope and Dreams

Encouraged and supported by a new dean in the School of Education and Human Development, a cadre of professional colleagues at RIC, both faculty and staff, were enthusiastic about this partnership. We were committed to educational equity for urban, culturally diverse students and schools. Further, we were optimistic that the time was ripe for school reform in the district and that we could make some positive contributions to that effort. The optimism was based on the results of a comprehensive and well-done investigation of the Providence schools that reached conclusions about needed reform with which most of us agreed. Further, a small group of MPHS teachers was excited about working with us to create a key component of our partnership, the Teacher Academy, a program designed to attract and prepare urban, culturally-diverse youngsters to enter the teaching profession through eventual participation in the College's Teacher Education Programs. Without downplaying the idealism with which we all started, it is certainly true that among the motives for the Mt. Pleasant High School/ Rhode Island College partnership were the accreditation needs of both institutions. In some ways, this was a marriage of convenience.

What did the partners want from this relationship? In retrospect, it is easy to see that our differing expectations could be a source of

problems. The Dean of Education and others at the college hoped for the development of a full-blown Professional Development School, and thus the opportunity to be actively involved with reform efforts at MPHS. There was hope that the two institutions could find ways of working together that would benefit the students of both. What most of the people at MPHS wanted was for the college to do more for their students; specifically, they felt that the college should be doing more to encourage their graduates to attend RIC. They hopedthat this would be done through activities provided by and at the college to interest and attract Mt. Pleasant High School students and that college attendance for at least some graduates would be made possible through scholarships. In a time of decreasing resources for both institutions, the college was viewed as the rich neighbor up the hill who could be doing more to support urban students. While there was interest in reform among some of the MPHS faculty, the idea of RIC might have input into or participation in reform at MPHS was not something that most people at the high school were willing to consider.

The opportunity to participate in this project appealed to me for a number of reasons. Mostly, though, I was excited about having the time to spend in the school and about being able to share what I knew about literacy, teaching, and learning. I knew from reading dozens of student observations of classes at the school that teaching done there was frequently uninspired. I thought I detected low expectations based on students' diverse backgrounds and their poverty. Both from having been a teacher in urban high schools for 10 years and from my professional studies, I felt that I had some understanding of the issues of student apathy, disrespect, and poor attendance, and that I was aware of some ways other schools with similar problems had of coping with and even reversing these factors. In short, I thought I could be useful and make a difference. However, from my own experiences of working with college faculty and participating in inservice experiences when I was a high school teacher, I was also aware of the need to proceed with great respect and caution in my dealings at the school. I had respect for the challenges that the teachers faced, and I saw myself as a resource and possible facilitator as they moved into some positive changes.

First Step

During the first year of our participation, I set out to establish myself by getting to know the school and its people. My goal was to establish trust and do whatever needed to be done to get the Teacher Academy started and, at the same time, to build the foundation of a more extensive partnership. I saw myself as a learner and coworker. I hung around and listened a lot. I got to know the students, the Teacher

Academy teacher-mentor team, and some other teachers and staff in the building. I worked closely with the MPHS coordinator and the teacher team in planning activities, events, and, eventually, curriculum. We established a program in which students from our introductory secondary methods course served as mentors, tutors, and learning coaches for Teacher Academy students. I read extensively about Professional Development Schools and school reform and encouraged teacher education colleagues in the various disciplines to consider moving some of their practicum experiences to Mt. Pleasant High School as a way of broadening our relationship and increasing our involvement. In many ways, this was a honeymoon period in which the core group of professionals from each institution was excited about the possibilities and enjoying the opportunity to work together to create the Teacher Academy Program and possibly more.

The second year brought more positive experiences. The Teacher Academy core group expanded by adding five new teacher-advisors. For the first time, a specific Teacher Academy course was offered. Two MPHS teachers and I worked together during the summer planning this course, and I had the delightful experience of team-teaching it, during the first semester, with one of those teachers. For this teacher educator, nothing could have been more affirming than the opportunity to be in a classroom daily with 27 high school sophomores and juniors and to learn that I could not only "practice what I preached," but that I could do it with considerable success. In addition, I found myself and my work in the education courses I was teaching being more and more grounded in the rushed and messy "real world" of teaching and in the realities of the lives of poor, urban youngsters.

As a counterbalance to these positive elements, I was beginning to realize, with a sinking feeling, that if establishing a Professional Development School was our major purpose, the prognosis was not good. Although I had established good relationships with those few teachers involved with the Teacher Academy, the culture of the school and the leadership style of the administration gave me the feeling that I was perpetually encircling some impenetrable fortress with little to no hope of ever getting in. And while RIC colleagues in several disciplines now had established practicum sites at MPHS, attempts on the part of others from the college to be more involved in the life of the school were not welcomed.

Reform Strikes Out

During the spring of the second year, Mt. Pleasant High School became involved in serious reform efforts. By this time, I had pretty

much defined my role as college coordinator for the Teacher Academy only, and so my role in this was unofficial and highly peripheral–I listened a lot and shared appropriate professional articles. Other efforts to be involved, or even just be helpful, on the part of RIC were rebuffed. Year three brought the reforms that MPHS faculty had decided upon–basically a house system based on themes and a rotating schedule–and year four saw most of the reform efforts thrown out on the basis of a very close vote by the Mt. Pleasant faculty. Had the teachers had the support (skill-building opportunities, time, resources, leadership) necessary to make the reforms work? I don't think they had, but more than that, the situation had most or all of the components of what Tittle (1995) identifies as "the culture of inertia" (p. 263) which paralyzes so many attempts to reform American public education. Those components include not only limited resources, but other elements such as the passive-conservative nature of the teaching profession, miscommunication, turf disputes, and the pervasiveness of "us versus them" thinking. In short, the very factors that doomed any in-depth partnership with the college also doomed the reform efforts that some of the faculty at MPHS so valiantly worked for on their own.

The Teacher Academy survived, but not unscathed. Most of the Teacher Academy teachers had worked hard on the reform efforts, and they were frustrated with the results. They were tired. There were feelings of betrayal and interpersonal conflicts stemming from complex and disappointing experiences of the previous year and a half. It took a full semester of that fourth year to reestablish a good working relationship among the MPHS teachers on the Teacher Academy team.

Conclusions and Reflections

What are the perils of school/college partnerships? Based on this experience, I can identify at least two. First, given the two cultures involved, the college and the high school, it is dangerously easy to reconfirm old prejudices. Despite the best of intentions and the gentlest of approaches, many high school teachers (and administrators) may perceive the institution of the college and college professors as the "other," intent on imposing ideas upon them through force of "higher status." (After all, we do call it "higher education.") Attempts, such as the one I made, to work collegially may only serve to marginalize the individual making the effort; I cannot count how many times I heard MPHS teachers say, "We know you understand, *but* the College (or the Dean)...." I also heard RIC colleagues express their frustrations when efforts to work together were rebuffed or made extremely difficult by people at the high school. I still feel some frustration about that myself, even as I come to understand more about the sources of the difficulties.

Second, the cost of establishing a partnership may be very high, both to the institutions and to those working to create the partnership. For partnership development to move forward efficiently and effectively, it would be best if both of the institutions involved had smooth-working, open, participatory decision-making systems already in place. Several studies document the role of the principal and the school wide decision-making process as crucial to partnership development (Valli, Cooper, & Frankes, 1997). Without this stability, time and resources can be wasted at almost every step of the process, if the process happens at all. On an individual level, professors who spend time working on partnerships take that time from other activities more productive of the research and writing that are highly valued at the post-secondary level. They may also find, as I did, that the work I had to do in this effort took me a long way from my key academic focus on literacy. Participants from the high school risk both wasting their energies and becoming alienated from colleagues who view such efforts skeptically.

What are the promises of this particular experience? First, we do have the Teacher Academy Program functioning, and while it needs ongoing development and support, it is a worthy and viable program that has the potential to meet some of need for recruitment and training of culturally diverse teachers for which it was designed. Secondly, the tutoring/mentoring program that we established with the Teacher Academy continues, and thus our students in the secondary teacher education program all have the opportunity to work in an urban school setting and to get to know these young people on an individual basis. The RIC students rate this as one of the most important components of their introductory coursework; they appreciate the opportunity to get beyond some of their misconceptions about urban students and schools and acknowledge the value of having their coursework grounded in the real world.

Finally, as a teacher educator, I consider the experiences I had during the four years working with MPHS priceless. Despite my disappointment in not being more effective and in the limited opportunity I had to use my academic strengths in this effort, I have learned a great deal that serves to ground and inform my practice as a teacher educator. My experience has increased my credibility with my teacher education students, both graduate and undergraduate, and it influences almost every decision I make, both in course and curriculum development with colleagues and in my own planning and actions in the classroom. Even if it is costly, and whether or not the arrangements fit into the category of partnerships, it seems to me imperative that teacher educators periodically have the opportunity for significant experiences in the public schools, as learners and coworkers, and not just as occasional visitors or invited experts.

The challenges of bringing about changes in public schools are formidable (Sizer, 1996). There's no evidence that this generalization is less applicable to changes in public colleges. True collaboration involves willingness to change from both parties involved, and deep commitment to change is not so easily gained. Sizer suggests that the slow process of change in American schools in recent decades is a result of a "tacit acceptance of differences among stated goals" (p. 112). The implication is that we don't have the courage to face the issues that genuine change would open up. He continues:"Letting the sleeping dog of existing practices lie assures that it will not wake up and make us pay attention."

In their report on the 7-year-old relationship between Queens College and Louis Armstrong Middle School, Trubowitz and Longo (1997) say, "The attempt to link two different cultures, college and public school, might be compared to an effort to mate two different species. The joining will be difficult and obstacles will be inevitable" (p. 65). They describe the 10 stages of development that they have experiences over the 17 years, and, from my perspective, the RIC/MPHS partnership is somewhere between Stage 3: The Period of Truce and Stage 4: Mixed Approval. Within the limited but shared goal of maintaining the Teacher Academy Program, the two institutions do have a better relationship than they had at the beginning of this experience. There is great potential for further work; there are many challenges still to be faced.

Trubowitz and Longo (1997) view school-college collaboration as a creative enterprise with endless questions. I would agree with them and acknowledge that the enterprise requires great flexibility, patience with uncertainty, and willingness to commit human and material resources in less traditional ways. The potential for learning on the part of all participants and the promise of making positive differences in the school and in the teacher education program are reasons enough to accept these challenges.

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A Literacy-Focused Professional Development Academy

Sharon W. Kossack, Joyce C. Fine

"No link in the education chain is intellectually weaker–or institutionally more tenacious–than teacher education," argues Denis P. Doyle (1996) in the *Los Angeles Times*. "(Teacher education) is a classic example of a 'closed system,' one in which there is little or no feedback from the outside world. Teacher educators, institutionally insulated, have been under little pressure to change or improve."

The Impossible Dream

At Florida International University two literacy faculty members sought to challenge the thinking reflected in Doyle's accusations. We did so by developing, updating, and expanding an on-site, practice-what-you-preach, literacy-intensive Professional Development School (PDP) master's program. Even though we had no additional faculty, funds, or resources, we attempted to tailor the program to the needs of students at the school site.

Opportunity Conversation

We conferred with the schools. In collaboration with a principal with whom we had a long-standing cordial, trusting relationship, we mutually compared needs and resources. From this conversation, a remarkable fact emerged: Through collaboration, both institutions could gain significant resources. One institution's need was, in fact, the other institution's resource. For example, the school needed in-depth teacher training. As a research and development center for the county, the school should be implementing state-of-the-art, cutting-edge curricu-

lum projects. A majority of the teachers had taught at this center for many years; half lacked a master's degree, and many lack training in current reading methodology in spite of significant changes in the field. This jeopardized their role in modeling cutting-edge strategies. Our institution, Florida International University (FIU) needed students in our master's program, which had a specialization area in literacy. Their need–teacher training–was our resource.

The university needed best-practice placements for our student teachers. When teachers supervise student teachers, they gain released time (as student teachers assume more and more responsibilities for the classroom day) and a tuition waiver that grants them a full semester of course work at no charge. Thus, the university's need became a teacher-training opportunity for the school: We gave placement preference to teachers enrolled in the master's program which provided them graduate study at minimal charge and free time to complete tasks associated with their graduate courses. This also provided us with closely monitored best-practice placement experiences for our student teachers.

As a research and development center, the school needed to engage in research and dissemination. University faculty needed to conduct research and disseminate findings via presentations at a professional meetings, and publish books and articles in professional journals. Both endeavors needed additional funding, so it seemed self-evident that both institutions could benefit from mutual collaboration on grant proposals.

The College of Education lost available campus-based classrooms at times convenient to teachers. Schools, on the other hand, have many areas for training available after hours. Teachers, we found, welcomed the informality and relative comfort of non-campus-based instruction. We found the spaces easier to manage since we taught in classrooms arranged in cooperative groups, eliminating the hastily preclass rearranging and postclass replacement into straight rows. We had immediate access to materials, such as children's books or content textbooks, and direct strategy applications surrounded us since we generally used the classrooms of teachers in the program. It seemed as if we had a learning laboratory crafted for the benefit of maximizing teacher training.

Each challenge raised by either institution seemed to offer more opportunity. It became increasingly clear that through collaboration, both institutions had more resources than either could assemble alone. So we began crafting a collaborative, on-site Professional Development Academy (PDA).

Table 1

Mutual Need-Resource Match in Professional Development Collaboration

School Needed:	Florida International University Had:
In-depth, change-oriented teacher training	Cutting-edge graduate study
Incentive for updating skills	No-charge degrees (tuition waivers) Released time (student teachers) $2,000 raise upon completing degree $1500 increase after completing 8 courses
Extra adult assistance	Student teachers, field students
Instructional support	Professor-in-residence conducting model Lessons and cognitive coaching in their classes
Research	Classroom action research; faculty research
Identification of best practice	On-line computer search with university-donated computer, modem, and printer with direct link to search resources (e.g., FIRN, PantherNet, Internet); professional expertise
Dissemination	Presentations at professional meetings, articles, train-the-trainer opportunities, curriculum development); Internet home page with "Teach Peeks," best practice videotapes; Bahamas Teachers Training Teachers link
Funding	Grant writing collaboration; financial aid; monetary awards

School Needed:	Florida International University Had:
Acknowledgment	Awards; newspaper articles; radio spots; requests for training in other locations
Technology support	Faculty expertise

Florida International University Need:	School Has:
Faculty offices	Office areas, phone access
Students for graduate program	Half of the teachers without master's degrees
Research contexts/topics	Researchable needs; children, schools, teachers, parents, and other subjects; school-wide school improvement team goals
Teaching-learning contexts	Classrooms, schools
Teaching areas	Classrooms, media center available after school hours
Funding	Grant proposals which involve collaboration tend to be more readily funded
Best-practice student teacher placements	Clinically certified teachers
Skills updating, especially for those out of field	Inservice opportunities in conjunction with graduate course work, research projects

Professional Development Academy

For the PDA, we crafted a wholly on-site master's degree program that featured hands-on, interactive, practice-what-you preach, classroom-relevant course work. In these courses our graduate students learned via the techniques we trained them to use: cooperative learning, peer coaching, alternative assessment (e.g., demonstration of mastery, portfolios, rubrics). Students accessed everything on-site, from admissions, registration, and advisement to course delivery. We made every effort to secure funding to defray the cost of the course work: Teachers enrolled in the master's program received first priority to have a student teacher placed in their classrooms. This meant the teachers received fee waivers for two semesters' worth of course work. We assisted our master's students in securing county funds to reimburse them for the semester of expenses not covered by the university-generated fee waivers. We helped secure a number of minority grants and monetary awards for selected students that supported their textbooks expenses or travel to professional meetings. At these meetings, the teachers shared strategies they learned or developed during the program, which met the school's need for dissemination.

Professors involved in the program served as professors-in-residence. On the days these professors taught a course at the school, they arranged to spend the afternoon there coaching students in the program, conducting classroom demonstrations or research, holding office hours, serving on committees, collaboratively writing grant proposals, and other problem solving.

Innovative Practices

In an effort to maximize the benefit of on-site delivery, we included children in our course. In this way, the teachers perceived professors as current, since they applied strategies directly with children in a classroom context. We believe that teachers have a tendency to learn more effectively when expected to apply techniques directly with children in their graduate classes. So, both students–adult educators and children–benefit.

Initially, professors brought their students into classrooms for demonstrations or showed videotapes of strategy applications in classrooms. One summer writing workshop lent itself to innovation (both with small numbers and informal, 3-week-long, all-day delivery). Mornings involved teachers learning (and applying to their own writing) various process writing strategies; afternoons were devoted to teachers applying these strategies with children (elementary school) involved in a *Right Write Summer Link*. In the fall, fourth graders (who faced the *Florida Writes* examination) were invited to join graduate

students in a *Think Write Club*, in which teachers and students, together, experienced various speaking, listening, reading, and writing techniques in a graduate language arts course. When we processed strategies, children talked about their reactions and understandings of the various techniques and suggested ways to change them to make them more effective.

Later, we combined our Diagnosis and Remediation courses and offered them in a 4-week block (*The Community Literacy Club*). More than 35 at-risk children participated in this theme-based, literacy-mentoring project. The graduate students learned by actually interacting with the children, one-on-one. We experimented with other unusual delivery systems. For example, children's literature course was delivered through distance learning across two counties, and week-long intensive courses were offered during spring break.

Reflections

As we entered our sixth year, we reflected on this experience. There were many positives:

Awards. Both individual teachers and schools received significant recognition. The Department of Education recognized the research and development school as a National School of Excellence two years after we began collaborating. The New Jersey Writing Project named the second PDS site a National Writing Center at the end of the first year of our collaboration.

Grant funding. Forty-two teachers submitted action research projects to the Florida Reading Association (FRA) for funding. FRA granted only two awards, both to inner city teachers in our program. Several teachers wrote mini-grants in order to access district funds for action research projects. A number of these received funding. We secured a $50,000 State of Florida Break-the-Mold Incentive Challenge Grant with a collaborative proposal for alternative assessment, a cornerstone of the content of our program and our training.

Professional dissemination. Teachers associated with our Professional Development Academy courses/training have shown professional leadership. More than 14 published articles in professional journals. These articles derive from unusual applications of existing techniques (e.g., innovative uses of Venn diagrams and the application of an adult thinking/decision making program) (*CoRT*, de Bono, 1947) in kindergarten classes or in a fifth grade social studies unit on elections. Many of our students have presented at professional meetings such as the Florida Elementary Education Association Conference, Florida

Reading Association Conference, Coalition of Essential Schools' Fall Forum, and American Reading Forum. A number of our teachers have been asked to train other teachers in neighboring counties relative to the infusion of thinking skills throughout their curriculum. We will prepare best-practice videotapes to illustrate application of effective strategies at various grade levels. These videos will become a part of our *PDA Internet Home Page*. The home page will include a section on "Teach Peeks," that will allow teachers to (a) access strategy cards of effective techniques and (b) view brief best practice video clips for each strategy. We filmed a best-practice videotape of classroom applications of de Bono's CoRT Thinking for the March, 1997, *20-20* TV program.

For every positive, there were challenges:

State politics. The Florida Board of Regents dictates the location of university programs and has a policy disallowing duplication of effort. The board of Regents designated Florida Atlantic University (FAU) as the lead institution for Broward County, which meant they had first choice of programs they wished to offer. Since both institutions offered an undergraduate elementary education program, FIU's professional development school lost the on-site course work portion of their undergraduate program. As a result, our PDS lost major during-the-day resources, notably the frequent in-class demonstrations of current practice, consistent infusion of additional adults in classrooms across the school, and voluntary tutors for at-risk students (a part of undergraduate special literacy projects).

State budget cuts also affected release time policies and personnel allocations. This restricted the amount of time professors could spend on administrative duties or school site collaborations (e.g., demonstration lessons, committee work, action research support, grant writing). FIUs College of Education shifted personnel resources from school-site projects (like the PDS) to campus-based doctoral programs.

County politics. Politics at the local level also played a part. In spite of multi-level approvals and a 3-year track record, the change of the superintendent and other county personnel necessitated renegotiation of new agreements. We had to rebuild basic knowledge and reestablish trust with newly appointed administrators at the county and school-site levels. A newly hired, business-trained administrator in charge of school/community partnerships required us to draft a proposal to establish FIU as a "business" partner of the school. Each of these tasks required enormous expenditures of faculty time and energy. What originated with a trustful handshake became an unwieldy, time-consumptive mire of paperwork, Board presentations, and meetings. These

took a toll on faculty energies and the amount of time available for the actual program.

Standards. During this same time frame, FIU sought NCATE approval. The NCATE-PDS (1996) standards committee has two levels of standards: (a) Threshold Conditions (factors that are PDS baselines and which are prerequisite for moving to Quality Standard assessment) and (b) Quality Standards (factors which mark PDS evolution and evidence of achievement). An analysis of our PDS initiative relative to these Threshold Standards provided significant insights.

1. Evidence of a formal school/university partnership that shows agreement on the mission (teacher preparation, supporting student learning, and teacher development and inquiry).

We always maintained a formal agreement for student teacher placement. With the development of the PDS, we initially worked from two formal letters of endorsement from the original superintendent and his deputy superintendent. These were rendered null and void with the change of administration. We then had to draft two additional agreements: (a)a facilities usage (Lease Agreement) and (b) a partnership agreement which, was later discarded. The eventual lack of a formal, purposeful agreement adversely affected the continuance of the PDS.

2. Commitment by the partners to the core principles of (a) support of learning for all participants, (b) practice based on best knowledge available, (c) parity on all issues of practice and policy, (d) continuous improvement supported by ongoing practice-based research, (e) equity as it affects students and teachers.

We met all of these standards except the parity on all issues of policy. Removal of teachers and professors from policy making directly and adversely affected the project.

3. Positive working relationships and a basis for trust between partners.

This site-level trust formed the foundation of the PDS, but needed constant reestablishment with changes in administration or with teachers new to the program. Because the classes were on-site, some teachers expected inservice workshop-like delivery rather than the rigor of university graduate courses.

4. Achievement of quality standards by partner institutions as evidenced by regional, state or other reviews.

The schools involved in our program received National School of Excellence and National Writing Center designations. FIU was evaluated and passed NCATE review earning high praise for work at the PDS sites.

5. Institutional commitment of resources (financial and human) to the PDS for both partners including faculty participation, time commitments, financial support, organization to support mission.

The lack of resources for the university as a whole (which is deliberately funded at 70% actual capacity) created major obstacles for the creation and maintenance of a PDS. Florida legislators expect universities to make up funding shortfalls with faculty-secured grants. Fiscal cutbacks render grant funding difficult to secure. The two faculty members associated with the PDS wrote grants with the schools and with their graduate students. This collaboration secured over $50,000, but this was not adequate to effectively support PDS efforts.

6. A commitment by the PDS to work in the three areas defined by the quality standards: supporting a learning community; public and professional accountability; and the development of a culture, roles, and structures to support the mission of the PDS.

These factors constitute the greatest strength of the PDS. Modem links to the university afforded school sites access to current literature searches through the university library. We worked hard to establish a broad-based learning community which involved children, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community. We required teachers to conduct classroom action research projects, write grant proposals and publish professional journal articles that involved and documented student learning. We included children in graduate classes (e.g., *Community Literacy Club, Write Right, Summer Link, and Scribliolink*). Many of the teachers involved in the master's program demonstrated professional leadership as they presented strategies they researched to their colleagues at professional conferences and on professional development days.

Evaluation

The evaluation of our 5-to-7 year PDS using the NCATE rubics helped us understand what elements became obstacles to the efficient

and effective continuation of a time-intensive but worthwhile collaboration and suggest which critical issues to overcome should another such future project be proposed. All the good intentions, hard work, and accomplishments put in by professors, administrators, and teachers from such bottom-up projects has little chance for creating a relationship of permanence without a firm, continuing formal agreement which realistically commits resources and understandings on the part of all participants.

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Teacher Training and the Effect of Past Experience on Preservice Teachers' Concerns for the Role of the Internet in Planning and Instruction

Anne L. Mallery, Jane F. Rudden

There appears to be little doubt that electronic communications of all kinds (electronic mail, file transfers via communications, and direct talk modes via networked computers) will become increasingly important in the future. Russett (1994) reports that telecommunications provide a quick, efficient, and dependable source of information for more than 20 million people, and the Internet provides opportunity for businesses and private participants to communicate, store, and recall information with greater ease. Pool (1993) describes the Internet as an electronic network that connects colleges and universities to the world's largest and most complex library of approximately 50 thousand databases. Most educators recognize the value of this source of information and communication in the field of teaching; however, few teachers have the skills necessary to use the new technology (Werner, 1994).

School districts, realizing the power of the Internet as an information tool to improve communications and research, grappled with the problem of training teachers to use the new technology. Honey and Henriquez (1993) reported the results of a national survey designed to obtain a systematic profile of activities currently being undertaken by K-12 educators in telecommunications. Responses of 550 educators from 48 states who were a specialized group of experienced teachers

and were knowledgeable about computer technology indicated that telecommunications served as a valuable resource in teaching. Respondents reported that computer and library media specialists were usually the leaders in telecommunications practices, serving as a resource for other teachers. Most respondents were self-taught, and their responses emphasized the lack of telecommunications training available in the schools for practicing teachers.

Universities also struggled with questions about the appropriate semester and best approach for introducing telecommunications training to their preservice teachers. It was generally accepted that most college students had some background experience with computers; however, students with technology anxiety often became very skillful at avoiding assignments requiring these skills. While the Internet can be used as both a communications and a research tool, most of the articles published since 1992 were descriptive, alerting educators to problems to be avoided in developing instruction and reporting use of the Internet to improve communications among professors, cooperating teachers and college students. Russett (1994) stated that "it is not difficult to find information describing how enterprising teachers use telecommunications in their classrooms; however, it is very difficult to find studies describing how teacher education institutions can (or should) employ telecommunications" (p. 4). When or how should this instruction take place? Who should provide the training? Should valuable time be provided in education courses or should students be required to take workshops in computer labs? Could assignments of short duration be expected to show positive results? What could we learn about the instructional process that would assist teacher education programs in their efforts to provide effective technology training? All of these questions are debated by teacher educators.

To address these issues, more information is needed to determine the backgrounds of individuals enrolled in teacher education programs. Also needed are strategies that can stimulate interest in computer research and build students' confidence in using technology. This paper reports the results of an explanatory training and guided practice instructional plan developed at our institution.

Method

Participants

The participants who completed the survey were 53 sophomore elementary education majors enrolled in two sections of a foundations of reading course. Our goal was to determine if Internet instruction and

guided practice could effect a change in the concerns students had toward the value of technology in planning for instruction,researching information, professional development, and cross curricular planning. *The Stages of Concern Toward Innovation* (George, Hall, & Rutherford, 1977) instrument was used as a pre- and postmeasure of concern toward technology. In this instance, the innovation referred to by George et al. was identified by the authors as the use of Internet (see Appendix). Instruction surveys were administered at the beginning of the spring semester 1996. Posttreatment surveys were administered at the close of the semester, following instruction and completion of the tasks. Reed (1990) describes the rationale for the stages of concern instrument by stating:

> When people are exposed initially to an innovation, their concerns tend to be very self-oriented . . . Once these concerns are accommodated, they become more concerned about managing the innovation in their teaching, how the innovation will affect their students, how they might work with others in relation to the innovation, and when best to use the innovation. (p. 7)

The *Stages of Concern* instrument includes seven stages identified by George et al. (1997).

- First Stage is Awareness: I am not concerned about the Internet.
- Second Stage is Informational: I would like to know more about the Internet.
- Third Stage is Personal: How will using the Internet affect me?
- Fourth Stage is Management: I seem to be spending all of my time getting material ready when using the Internet.
- Fifth Stage is Consequence: How is my use of the Internet affecting my students?
- Sixth Stage is Collaboration: I am concerned about relating my use of the Internet with what other instructors are doing with it.
- Seventh Stage is Refocusing: I have some ideas about how something might work better.

Students were divided into three groups based on their initial responses to the following statements on the *Stages of Concern* instrument.

Statement 3: I don't even know what the Internet is,

Statement 6: I have very limited knowledge about the Internet, and

Statement 30: At this time, I am not interested in learning about the Internet.

Group 1 (n=8), prior experience, responded with "not true of me now." Group 2 (n=24), limited prior experience, responded with "somewhat true of me now." Group 3 (n=21),no prior experience, responded with "very true of me now." The finding that only 15% of the sophomores had prior experience, 45% had limited prior experience, and 40% had no experience indicated that most young adults in our classes were not exposed to technology in their homes or school settings, and they had not reached a comfort level that prevailed over anxiety about practical application. Therefore, we decided to provide the same training to all three groups of students and compare their levels of concern using a paired t-test design.

Training

All students received a 1-hour orientation to the Internet, during a regularly scheduled class period. Instruction was led by a library media specialist in the computer lab where students were paired at terminals. We observed that students' familiarity with computers varied from none at all to the experienced user. Instruction in navigating the Internet and finding information using the World Wide Web included:

- a definition of the World Wide Web
- logging on to the computer system
- accessing Internet
- navigating Internet via various web browsers
  - Lynx
  - www
  - Mosaic

- MacWeb
- NetScape

- explanation of a URL
- where to find the subject catalog of the Web
- names and focuses of automatic indexes (search engines) such as Yahoo, Lycos, WebCrawler, etc.

Guided Practice

Following the orientation, students worked with a partner to complete two tasks requiring use of the Internet. Task #1 required locating a web site dedicated to a special interest (e.g., music, Civil War, astronomy, photography, fishing, gardening, sports). The sophomores were to use this information to design a lesson that would integrate literacy skills. Task #2 required sophomores to develop an annotated bibliography of five web sites that would be useful to them as a teacher. These sites could include lesson plans, book lists, or articles to further their professional development.

Findings

At the completion of the semester, the *Stages of Concern* instrument was readministered to determine the differences in levels of concern between and among the three groups. These data were also inspected to form a hypothesis about how the training may have affected the levels of concern for each group: prior experience, limited prior experience, and no prior experience. Table 1 shows the changes in levels of concern for each group by way of pre- and posttest means. Changes, as determined by the paired *t*-test, are printed in bold type.

To interpret these scores, we used stages of concern outlined in this paper. These concerns about an innovation can be traced through four phases. The first phase is one of self-orientation, what does the use of this innovation do for me. The second phase is a concern for managing the innovation if used for instructional purposes. An understanding of the basic rudiments and limited practical application of the innovation have been understood at this phase, but a comfort level for incorporating the innovation into curriculum planning still poses a concern. The third phase focused on how the innovation will affect students. This is a departure from self-orientation to a concern for others. It is a notable transition and a harbinger of effective integration of the innovation into instruction. The fourth phase relates to working with peers in the use

Table 1

Stages of Concern Toward Innovation
Pre and Posttest Means

	Prior Experience			Limited Prior Experience			No Prior Experience		
	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
Stages of Concern	Pre-Test Means	Post-Test Means	*T-score*	Post-Test Means	Pre-Test Means	*T-score*	Pre-Test Means	Post-Test Means	*T-score*
Awareness	35.9	38.7	0.318	53.0	49.0	-.318	67.8	49.0	-5.018**
Informational	80.3	83.6	0.334	92.4	88.3	-3.250*	96.7	94.7	-5.383**
Personal	81.8	85.4	0.378	88.8	92.0	.239	90.6	89.4	-0.200
Management	52.4	60.8	0.63	66.5	78.4	.959	83.6	80.7	-1.997*
Consequence	49.8	65.8	5.526**	55.5	63.5	.236	44.9	56.6	5.194**
Collaboration	57.8	73.1	1.287	60.2	65.1	1.610	57.2	54.7	1.794
Refocusing	76.0	82.3	2.301	77.8	82.0	.682	64.6	77.9	4.320**

* Significant at .05 to .003
** Significant at .001 to .0003

of the innovation and looking for additional or alternative ways to use the innovation to achieve effective teaching. This phase clearly separates self-oriented concerns from other oriented concerns that encourage experimentation and peer interaction.

As shown in Table 1, posttest scores of participants with prior experience (Group 1) revealed an increase in all stages of concern, most notably an increase in the area of Consequence. This departure from self-oriented concerns indicates that this group had all but left behind any preoccupation with anxieties about learning the basics of accessing and applying information available on the Internet to their teaching practice.

Posttest scores of participants with limited prior experience (Group 2) revealed a decrease in the area of Informational concerns. These students appeared to have reached a level of satisfaction regarding their knowledge base as Internet users. We think this speaks to the effectiveness of the training and the appropriate focus of the tasks. Both were tailored to show direct application of the Internet to teaching and were directly related to course expectations.

Posttest scores of participants with no prior experience (Group 3) also are related to the effectiveness of the instruction, the appropriateness of the tasks, as well as effects of guided practice on lowering levels of concern and anxiety. Differences were shown in the areas of Awareness, Information, Management, Consequence, andRefocusing. Though we expected a reduction in students' levels of concern, we were not expecting such sweeping changes for this group in areas unrelated to self, specifically, Consequence and Refocusing. This might be explained as a ride on the wave of success. The instruction was well paced, the tasks were guided and specific to planning and instruction, and working with a partner provided a safety net. Prospective teachers often exhibit an enthusiasm to effect change in the world of teaching, and this group may have reevaluated the Internet as a tool for planning and teaching. Moreover the change in their concerns about Refocusing indicates they developed ideas about using the Internet in their teaching in new and different ways.

Discussion

Teacher education programs and public schooling are entering an electronic age where the Internet will become increasingly more important as a communication and information gathering tool. We were surprised to discover in our literature search that most recent publica-

tions discussed using the Internet for communications purposes, but little research was reported about strategies to train preservice teachers in the use of technology. We felt it was important to find out about the backgrounds of our studentsto determine if instruction of short duration could affect changes in their learning behaviors and attitudes about using technology.

One would assume that in this age of technology many students in university classrooms have used computers in their school and home settings and would already have some familiarity with the Internet. This was not true for our students. However, even those students who initially experienced computer anxiety became skillful when placed in a situation that required computer use. When planning future Internet training, we need to address the wide range of differences among students' knowledge about and past experiences with using technology.

Class time and student contact hours are very limited, and some university instructors could be reluctant to use valuable time for computer training. We felt, however, that students would be more motivated to experiment with technology if training was directly attached to a class project. We found that short term training that involved guided practice resulted in positive changes in our students' learning behaviors and attitudes about technology.

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Appendix

Attitudes Toward Using The Internet

Directions: Answer as completely and truthfully as you possibly can when thinking how each of the following statement applies to your PRESENT attitude toward using the Internet. Circle the number that best reflects your present attitude. The higher the number, the better the statement reflects your present attitude.

0 1 2 — Not true of me now; 3 4 5 — Somewhat true of me now; 6 7 — Very true of me now

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1. I am concerned about people's attitudes toward using the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2. I now know of several approaches for how I might go about using the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3. I don't even know what the Internet is.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	time to learn about the Internet so that I can use it effectively.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	5. I would like to help other people use the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	6. I have very limited knowledge about the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	7. I would like to know how the Internet might affect me when I am trying to teach.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8. I am concerned about what my employer might expect me to know about the Internet and how those expectations might be in conflict with what I would like to do.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	9. I am concerned about improving what I presently know about the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10. I would like to work with potential or present co-workers who are using the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	11. I am concerned about how the Internet might affect my students.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	12. I am not concerned about the Internet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	13. I would like to know who will make decisions about my using the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 14. I would like to discuss the possibility of using the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 15. I would like to know what resources are available if the Internet is to be integral to my job.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 16. I am concerned about my inability to learn all there is to know about using the Internet effectively.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 17. I would like to know how my job is supposed to change because of the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 18. I would like to familiarize my co-workers and my employees with the Internet as I learn about it and work with it more.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 19. I am concerned about how the Internet might affect my students.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 20. I would like to be able to change how the Internet might be used as I learn more.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 21. I do not care much about the Internet because my schedule prevents me from doing so.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 22. I would like to modify the use of the Internet based on the experiences of my students.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 23. Although I don't care much about the Internet, I am concerned about it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 24. I would like to excite my students about the uses of the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 25. I am concerned about the time needed to learn about the Internet that will keep me away from doing what I am supposed to be doing as part of my job.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 26. I would like to know what using the Internet will require in the immediate future.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 27. I would like to coordinate my efforts in learning about the Internet with co-workers.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 28. I would like to have more information on the time and energy required in order to learn about the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 29. I would like to know what other people are doing in relation to using the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 30. At this time, I am not interested in learning about the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 31. I would like to determine how to supplement and enhance the use of the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 32. I would like to use feedback from my students to change the use of the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 33. I would like to know how my job will change when I am using the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 34. My present schedule is preventing me from learning too much about using the Internet.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 35. I would like to know how using the Internet is better than the methods I presently plan to employ when I do my job.

World Wide Web: Proposals and Pilots for Connecting Schools to Authentic Commerce in Literature, Ideas, Humanitarianism, and the Free Market

Anthony V. Manzo, Ula C. Manzo, Andrew Lang, Amy Barnhill

Most every communications innovation since letter writing, from the telephone to radio, film, and television, has tended to pull us further away from print. Buffeting this trend is telecomputing, which is intrinsically grounded in text. Its print, however, is quite different from the traditions of books and even more quick-paced than newspapers and magazines (Alvarez, 1996; McKenna, Robinson, & Miller, 1990; Otto et al., 1996). This paper continues to examine the implications of this formidable influence on reading and writing by discussing particular proposals of the authors, some of which are operational in pilot form.

Knowledge and the Web

Telecomputing is propelling a revolution in the management and creation of knowledge. Neither schools, corporations, nor other institutions will ever be quite the same. Control of knowledge, which all agree "is power," is shifting from the autocratic managers of the old paradigm who hoarded it (Darling, 1996) to a new paradigm that is

evolving more open access. This is resulting in different ways of sharing power with resulting implications to education, public policy, and even to prior definitions of what constitutes discipline knowledge, expertise, and regulatory authority.

Assuming continued progress in providing full telecomputing access, this new leverage is being extended to nearly anyone and everyone who can read and write proficiently. A new village is being created in which everyone is the mayor (reminiscent of Father Guido Sarducci's satirical religion in which "everyone is the pope").

WWW as Electronic Village and New source of Incidental and Authentic Learning

Telecomputing offers a more enlarged and one-to-one level of influence on knowledge and learning than has even been imagined, let alone possible. Ironically, with few exceptions, the efforts of most schools, foundations, and learned societies to develop and tap the possibilities and implications of this fact have been minimal and largely unimaginative. Presently, we shall discuss some of the promise and problems of telecomputing as it merges the efforts and influences of educational institutions from elementary to college and adult levels with those of functioning communities nationally and globally. This discussion is a necessary backdrop for this paper's focus, which is to propose and report on several ways that the authors are tapping cyberspace to advance higher-order literacy and several related social, entrepreneurial, and humanitarian objectives. While some of the websites being developed may not seem immediately relevant to literacy education per se, they clearly are so in the social constructivists'views of knowledge, learning, and power, and to liberationist educators in the tradition of Paulo Freire (1985).

Telecomputing and Social Constructivist Theory

Many articles in the research literature of education conclude with some allusion to the fact that the benefits of the instructional strategy or program reported would have been greater if it had been extended longer and if there had been greater family and community support for the intervention. This is another way of saying that the objectives of school are best achieved when they are compatible with, and incidentally reinforced by the world outside the school walls–which, afer all, is merely another affirmation of the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" and also of social constructivist theory which says that knowledge is a social construct and that learning is a function of the interaction of the child, the family, the school and the community (Graue, 1993; Telfer, Reed, Jennings, & McNinch, 1996).

In general, the benefits of incidental learning models, such as whole-language approaches, do not tend to compare well in experimental research with direct instruction (McKenna et al., 1990). However, most studies are short-term and tend to miss the point that these two options were never meant to be compared but artfully combined (Manzo & Manzo, 1997a). In fact, the power of direct instruction is diminished or multiplied in near direct proportion to the opportunities available for students to incidentally observe and interact with competent models of desired attitudes and behaviors. Even then, incidental learning tends to be "hit or miss" depending largely on students' orientation to the learning opportunities and their receptivity to the social values being represented. For this reason, the ideal incidental learning opportunity needs to contain functions that will draw attention to the desired behaviors, attitudes, and social benefits of and to the model; involve and provide for reciprocal interactions with such models; and include some form of critical-constructive feedback (Manzo & Manzo, 1997b). These requirements often are best met when they can be organized to resemble authentic (i.e., real world) conditions that are experiential as well as cognitive. In other words, in order for incidental opportunities to serve as a reliable sources of learning, more so than just passive immersion, they must meet certain established assumptions of social constructivist theory as well as to meet certain principles of social and imitation learning theory (Bandura, 1987; Manzo & Manzo, 1997b).

Telecomputing on the web offers powerful opportunities to incidentally immerse students, as well as those beyond formal schooling, in several interactive ways with viable communities of interests, knowledge, and life pursuits. Such authenticity tends to intrinsically parallel the principles of critical pedagogy, effective social and imitation learning, and social constructivist theory–the web simply being a new influence on social incentives and hence, construction.

WWW: It's Got the Whole World Talking and Constructing

The benefits of the web are derived largely from quantitative changes with qualitative impact. Its chief advantage is that it can create a critical mass of minds, albeit in cyberspace, that might not otherwise have come together. It does this simply by increasing the number of persons that can be involved in any given undertaking or consideration. The eminent historians Will and Arial Durant (1968) noted that progress often is determined by the "presence or absence of initiative and of creative individuals with the clarity of mind . . . to mount effective responses to new situations" (p. 91). Even in its formative, chaotic, and sometimes bawdy form, the web tends to inspire something of a higher communal consciousness than any individual or institution or institution seems able to achieve without it. Support for such views and other related values of worldwide telecomputing is summarized below.

The WWW:

- contains mainframes of information on most every topic, albeit in no organized and easily accessible form;
- includes numerous breaking and emerging stories, events, and facts;
- provides opportunities for interaction with leading thinkers, shakers, and movers;
- is creating a society that potentially is less stratified by socioeconomic status, color, or even tested IQ, but more by effectiveness of thoughts and persuasion;
- permits one to observe, store, and retrieve *processes*–(i.e., discussions and interactions) as well as *products*–(i.e., original text and stories);
- is a relatively untapped mine of commercial possibilities;
- is a place where sheer numbers of users create probabilities for the critical mass necessary to do most anything from tweaking a significant new idea in physics to identifying venture capital sources for new business and humanitarian ventures;
- is an idea accelerator that is faster than conventional books and articles, more complete than conventional media coverage, and more interactive than either;
- is an economic and social engine at least equal to all prior means of transporting and bringing minds together;
- is an opportunity to create a new world order and citizenry that is inherently free of traditional politics, politicians, and national boundaries, and, as such, likely to release wellsprings of person-to-person empathies, goodness, charity, and concern such as never before has been possible;
- is part of a reconnection to one another, from the time all shared common lineage, to a coming time when diverse looks, languages, and cultures will *not* be the initial way in which we see and hence perceive one another;

- has created a cerebral schema net and microwave information archive around the earth capable of catching and preserving fleeing thoughts, insights, and possible solutions that otherwise take decades to eons to precipitate into recognizable forms.

Untangling and Extending the Web

Several developments are changing, modifying, or otherwise just plain fixing and broadening many of the current entanglements to, and limitations of, the web. Here are a few of those change agents:

- Improved, though expensive, software is making computers capable of retranslating spoken and written language into computer language and conventional print.

- Newer navigation software and related efforts are doing a better job of organizing (i.e., schematizing) the web.

- Products already are available, though *very* expensive, for telecomputing without phone lines.

- Services have already developed that take voice messages and convert them into written transcriptions (one, operating in India, does so for physicians around the world for 30 cents a page vs. a dollar a page in the USA).

- Software are available that permit communications to automatically be forwarded to interested parties ("listserves") and to monitor and keep a record of the number of persons looking in on a certain website (called "hits").

- Many more industries and individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and interests are finding their way to the web.

- New hardware will be available any time now that will offer access to the web through computers that derive all of their power from web-server companies (e.g., America OnLine, AT&T) and hence will reduce the cost of computers to that of other household appliances (under $500).

- Soon television sets and cable will offer access to the web and in a stroke, put the web everywhere cable television now

reaches–though a recent survey reports that only 17% of people currently believe they even want access, but that likely will grow with availability and incentives.

- Many other helpful inventions and technologies are coming to be used in telecomputing and on the web (e.g., bar code technology [as used i retail stores]now is being successfully deployed to quickly call-up selected portions of CD ROMs and soon will be available for even more rapid navigation on the web).

Beyond Surfing and Chatting: The Practical Future

While there are many exciting and inventive activities already on the World Wide Web, few are being used in the structured and interactive ways that build and help one to digest knowledge, as opposed to "surfing" and mere chatting. To blend, more so than mix metaphors, the efforts we report here constitute something of an ecological or structural change in the way schooling and life are conducted, and hence likely to have an impact over time that will be systemic, cumulative, and pervasive. The practical future should result in more "schools without walls," more social and governmental services that are responsive to human needs, improved problem solving particularly of a systems type, and greater participation in democratic processes and free markets. Ahead, we will describe some of the efforts we are undertaking to weave a web that is more in keeping with the purposes of schools and other social, free market, and humanitarian interests and institutions. Each undertaking might be characterized as an effort to create a level of active immersion that is deliberate, purposeful and, in the tradition of critical pedagogy, open to the influences of those it touches.

Reader Exchange

The core notion for the ReaderExchange first was recommended some time ago (Eanet & Manzo, 1976; Manzo, 1973, 1986). It was viewed as a way for sharing thoughts on books and important articles that would become especially plausible as telecomputing, then in its infancy, became more widely available. After a very slow start, however, the technology has begun to move so fast that, in some cases, it is already past this elementary idea, yet the system advocated has not yet flourished. To become workable, it must garner some form of agency support, as would any new venture of its intended proportions. As a practical matter, it would serve as:

- a means of assisting teachers in reviewing and reacting to student efforts to write;

- an extant system encouraging literal and critical-constructive reading and writing;

- both a set of training wheels for novices and a superstructure for encouraging and archiving reader responses to a wide variety of text;

- a performance-based means of evaluating progress in higher-order literacy–but more on this presently.

The idea, sometimes known as the Annotation Exchange System (AES) goes like this: Students, teachers, and interested others have an open invitation to write brief annotative responses to any article or book, or to previous critiques of others (Manzo, 1986; Strode, 1996). Critiques are reviewed periodically by a cadre of students, teachers,librarians, and home-based editors and journalists–who may be paid or volunteer; AES reviewers use a scoring rubric based on a hierarchy of thinking to evaluate progress toward higher-order reading and writing. These "reviewer editors" also offer aid in correcting and revising submissions. This stage in the process provides much-needed help for the huge problem of classroom teachers who simply are unable to read and react to their many students' efforts to write. The most poignant annotations then are transmitted to a central agency that does a second review for possible inclusion in the network pool. In final form, the best critiques are published and become "ideational organizers" (Ausubel, 1960), available to subsequent users in schools, public libraries, and "on line" to those who may wish to review such annotations prior to, during, or following reading of selected articles and books.

There have been several attempts to jump start the larger system. Strode (1996), for example, has set up an AES system in Columbia, MO, that allows university students to share their annotations on children's books with one another and with children in school. In an ongoing effort that included a recent pilot field study, also with college-age students, the writers attempted to examine the relationship between measured higher-order reading and writing and frequency of use. Participants' frequency of use ranged from zero times to six times during the semester. Students who did not use the electronic format shared their annotations with classmates who also did not use the system. Near the conclusion of the semester, all students were given a metaphorical passage to read and were asked to respond to it in writing. When they completed their responses, they were given a questionnaire that asked them to respond to questions such as how often they used the electronic format, if they considered written reflection an important component of the reading process, and would they use the electronic

format in the future. Each student's written response was analyzed and assigned two numeric scores–one reflecting the degree of success in abstracting the thesis and another assessing the form of the response. A cluster analysis of the data yielded two groups characterized along six variables: (a) frequency of use, (b) likelihood of future use, (c) agreement to the importance of written reflection, (d) abstraction of thesis, (e) quality of form, and (f) Nelson-Denny score. Those with weaker levels of reading (Nelson-Denny Reading Test) and writing (identified as cluster 2) were also the same individuals who chose to use the system with more frequency than those with the highest reading and writing (see Table 1). From this initial field research and related experiences, it appears that weaker readers/writers seem more willing to use a computer-based, and admittedly more contrived, system than typically they might, perhaps because they sense their need for assistance in reading highly literate material and welcome this more private, "ready-when-you-are" type of help.

Table 1

Cluster Means of Students in Annotation Exchange Exercise

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2
Frequency of use	.46	.75
Writing (thesis score)	2.88	1.87
Writing (form score)	3.50	0.88
Reading	15.30	14.70

As noted previously, the Annotation Exchange system (AES) simultaneously seems to be a form of writer training wheels, and a means of teaching-up. It can be demanding and frustrating to students and teachers since it homes-in on the writing/thinking needs of weak readers, but also some seemingly proficient readers with a habit of operating at a literal, or familiar and reconstructive, level of analysis. At its heart, AES is pointed toward promoting higher-order literacy–or raising the reader's inclination to be transformed as well as informed, and/or merely transactionally pleased by what is read. The effects of

such writing and discourse on transformational learning was verified recently. In a sophisticated rotating treatments study, Garber (1995) found that the transformational condition, using AES as a main component, resulted in significantly greater progress in reconstructive and constructive reading and writing and in personal-social adjustment than did treatments based either on traditional transmission (reconstructive) theory or a more open-ended afferent, transactional approach such as has been attributed to Rosenblatt (1978).

Registry for Better Ideas (RBI)

The RBI is intended to be a new level of reminder and invitation to all it reaches to think constructively and creatively. It is an effort to encourage, capture, and preserve fleeting insights into problems and possible solutions that do not seem to have a ready home or are beyond one's area of formal training and expertise. It is based on the belief that it often takes a serendipitous better idea to redirect well-intentioned, but misguided, efforts and that everyone from school-age kids to adults needs to know that they can and should be part of the effort to find better questions as well as better answers to many of the imponderables that surround us. The RBI creates an expanded classroom and electronic think tank where many discourses and connections can be made whenever one is ready to enter the dialogue. It also provides recognition, and hence a new level of incentive, for original and innovative thoughts and ideas.

Currently, the RBI operates as a website (http//cctr.umkc.edu/user/rbi/foundation.html) that permits one to submit an idea, have it time/date registered, and potentially shared with interested others. In this sense, it serves as a kind of prepatent office and/or prepublication sounding board for ideas in progress more so than for those that are ready for a patent claim or even formal publication. In due course, we expect it to evolve into a learned society with disciplinary categories but without disciplinary restrictions and dedicated to nurturing the earliest and most fragile moments of creative process, no matter from where or when they arise. This is especially important to education, and should be to educators, since it is pointed at the highest and most integrated level of human functioning and because problem-solving and fresh ideas are intrinsically pedagogic. In a word, it is and would be a global incubator for creative thinking and formative ideas which would have an electronic presence in every classroom that it reached.

The primary role of the RBI in education and public policy is to give greater presence to the underrepresented question, "Is there a better question or a more constructive-creative answer to this problem?" This is important because our research and related clinical experience sug-

gest that the single most powerful factor stimulating constructive-creative thinking is merely asking for it (Manzo & Manzo, 1997b). This implicit imperative also seems to positively interrupt close patterned thinking. Along the way, of course, it also provides many authentic reasons to read, write, and think reflectively and collaboratively.

The current crop of entries in the Registry range from an alternative to current affirmative action policies (one using reparations to solve the conundrum of potentially hurting some in an effort to help others) to a means for easily adjusting sewer and pipeline covers to the changing level of roads as they are repaved, thus saving municipalities millions of dollars and drivers from annoyance and dangerous swerving. Simple put, the RBI is another electronic means of creating the critical mass necessary to achieve the cooperation of many minds that Alexander Graham Bell reportedly observed to be necessary to achieve great discoveries and improvements.

Opportunity Network (ON)

This next proposal is tied to our larger social responsibility as educators, or a curriculum of caring as Rasinski (1989) has referred to it. ON is something of an interagency programming idea that would attempt to enlarge the reach of the hidden system that has been helping middle and upper middle income families for centuries. The system would use the Internet as well as conventional communications systems to link students from elementary to college level with outside sources who might wish to make a donation to, or a financial investment in, student proposals that also have social merit.

The system would be monitored at a local level largely by teachers and community leaders trained to operate workshops on how to write and submit individual or small-group proposals. See Table 2 for abstracted examples. Notably, the proposed system provides considerable, and authentic, motivation to write and think in ways that encourage personal responsibility, humanitarian caring, and upward economic mobility through a merger of charity and entrepreneurship. In this way, it should promote better understanding and internalization of belief in the notion of enlightened self-interest. which tends to benefit many, versus egotistical self-interest that tends to be self-glorifying and to benefit only oneself or a selfish few. ON would not be meant to replace but to complement and possibly reinform current individual and corporate charitable giving and governmental entitlements.

Table 2

Abstracts of Sample Submission to Opportunity Network

(Details of supervision and other particulars would be found in submitted proposals)

1. My grandparents are old enough to have lived through times of intense racial discrimination but too old to have enjoyed some of the benefits that the civil rights movement is providing to younger African-Americans. At this time, they are living in a house that needs many exterior repairs and painting. I would like to raise about $2000 to be able to buy the materials for some of these repairs and painting ($400) and to be able to hire the help of a younger cousin (who would receive about $500) and still earn the $3000 I need to return to college this fall. I hope to be able to earn approximately $2000 selling encyclopedias and ideally would like to raise an additional $1000 for the eight weekends it would take my cousin and myself to complete exterior painting and repairs.
Jeffery Combs, 20 yrs. Old
Sophomore, Baker University
(Assisted by Dr. Roger Wells, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Opportunity Network facilitator)

2. My sixth grade teacher told us about an interesting study. The study showed that remedial readers in a sixth grade class were able to serve as effective tutors to first and second graders, and along the way to have greatly improved their own reading and writing skills. My friend Charles and I would like to set up such a program. We need a teacher to train and supervise us. Tutors would work with younger kids for 3 hours a week from October to May. We think we can get 5 other students who would be willing to tutor. We would like to pay the teacher $1000, and each tutor $250. So I guess we would need about $2500. Our school said it would provide materials and a place to work.
Nancy Dean, 12 yrs. Old
6th grade, Kevin Elementary School
(Assisted by Nathan Limes, Social Studies teacher and Opportunity Network Facilitator)

3. Recently, I learned that two office buildings near my house invite yearly bids for cleaning. They provide all the supplies. My dad is a janitor and he knows how to do this and where to find good and reliable workers. I would like to help him and myself to start our own business by preparing a bid. I think that we could do this with help from a

woman in our church who ran a commercial cleaning company before she retired. We also need help from someone with editing and typing. We would greatly appreciate receiving $500 for the assistance we need to enter a bid and for the $5000 bond that I am told is required. If we are successful, we will use $2500 of the bond money by 1989-99 to help someone else through the network.
Ellen Rich, 16 yrs. Old, 11th grade
(assisted by Mrs. Jane Gold, P.E. teacher and Opportunity Network Facilitator)

4. I love music and play the oboe pretty well. I want to continue my oboe lessons, but my father, who has been caught in corporate downsizing, says that it is impossible to pay for more lessons with one brother in college and two kids to go. I have one after-school job that helps with my clothing and personal care costs. I don't think I could work another without hurting my grades. If I could raise the $1800 necessary for another year of lessons, I could offer such lessons myself in the future and perhaps create an income possibility for my college education. If I could get help myself now, I promise to teach music for more affordable rates and to give partial and full scholarships each year I teach to someone else in need.
Nancy Rankin, high school junior
(Assisted by Terry Francis, English teacher, and Opportunity Network Facilitator)

5. We think of ourselves as the best back/white tag wrestling team in the state of Kansas and plan to go to a local business college together next fall. In the meantime, we're looking for experience in starting and running a small business. The business we have chosen is cleaning and restoring wooden decks. We worked in this trade last summer for someone else. We need $2500 worth of equipment to go into business for ourselves. The equipment essentially is a power spray system that uses no harmful chemicals. We expect to charge approximately $400 per job (one hundred dollars less than competitors), our salaries would be $10 per hour each, and other costs would run about $5 per hour. A job takes about 8 hours, so labor costs should be about $160 per job, with other expenses averaging $35 per job. We expect to be able to get about 4 jobs per week. Hence, our weekly profit could be as high as $800. We would share 60% of profits with investors for all jobs done in a two-year period. After that we would like an option to buy out our investors for three times their original investments. If business justifies buying more equipment and hiring other workers, and/or to extend the business to resealing and painting decks, we would invite our original investors to invest further and to receive profits for up to 5 years before a buy out.

Chuck Storm and Terrance Eubanks
(Assisted by Opportunity Network facilitators and mentors, Francis Robertson, Home Economics teacher; & Charles Franks, Economics teacher)

As an additional social benefit, ON should promote diversity in several ways. For one, the dynamics of ON parallel all six aspects of ethnic identity described by Banks (1988), including one that most school lessons seldom reach; Globalism - "or the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function within one's group, the nation, and the world with focus on understanding which allegiance–ethnic, national, or global–is not appropriate in a given situation" (Tomlinson, 1996, p. 184).

In summary, ON offers another means for larger numbers of people to participate in the now worldwide updraft of concern for higher literacy, humanitarianism, and free market prosperity. Currently, we are seeking start-up funds for this effort. A proposal has been drafted for review by foundations, though not yet directed to any one of them. Frankly, educators have not warmed to this proposal, but we are not sure just why.

Literacy Consultants Network (LCN)

Information, while plentiful, often appears contradictory. Knowledge, on the other hand, is conceptual and tends to actively reshape the mind by resolving paradoxes, which often are the result of conflicting more so than contradictory information. LCN is an effort to create an enhanced system of information processing, more so than mere dissemination, in literacy education. LCN would serve as an information clearinghouse on literacy issues, much as does the ERIC system, but it also would take individual call-ins and e-mail questions and problems. This is necessary because such questions and problems often require much more labor intensive listening–or receiving of information. LCN then would provide subscribers with referrals to the best national and local consultants and resources.

Experienced literacy consultants would help callers to better frame their questions and conceivably, to gain quicker and sounder answers to some of these. Ideally, this system would be tied to several federally funded and university-based research centers that could use such inquiries to inform their research and development agendas. The interaction also should help to further close the gap between research findings and dissemination and between felt needs and informed research agendas.

There are operations underway at our home institution that resemble LCN. One is a Technology Center sponsored by the State of Missouri to provide assistance to schools and colleges in interpreting and meeting regulations governing the American with Disabilities Act. Another is a system that delivers quality information on child care to public providers and parents requesting specific help. This service was started by two enterprising graduate students under the supervision of Professor Susan Vartuli.

Educational Reform

Some say with conviction that it is no secret that America's public schools are failing (Fiske, 1991), while others state just as convincingly that such allegations constitute a very big lie (Bracey, 1991). We tend to belong to a more moderate camp that says that current educational systems, given existing parameters, have been relatively successful, but that some structural changes are necessary to correct flaws that are being magnified by technological advancements, as well as a rising social and global expectations about whom should be educated, in what ways, and toward what ends.

The WWW offers a truly unique opportunity to explore the restructuring of education, not merely with traditional blue-ribbon commissions and passionate but sometimes ill-informed populists, but with broad participation from many more who have a stake, will, and access to a computer terminal. Accordingly, we have dedicated a section of the RBI website simple called "Educational Reform" that contains proposals for discussion and review. Current proposals on our site range from means to restructure a school day to better align it with physical, psychological, and societal imperatives, to a system for paying royalties for teaching methods (a kind of software) and hence adding a tremendous financial incentive to the private sector for supporting educational research and development. We know of at least two similar websites: Effective Education(http://www.ib.org/rklima/ed.html) and Engines for Education (http://www.ils.nwu.edu/ne_for_e/).

Realistically, it will take collaborations with these and other such websites, as well as with learned societies and corporate sponsors to collectively draft the next chapter of American education.

College and University Commercialization (CUC) Network

CUC is a dialogue about why and how colleges, universities, and potentially other non-profit agencies might engage in selected activities for the purpose of generating a profit that could be used to further its research, educational, and humanitarian purposes. Exploration of

commercialization possibilities is part of a larger global effort to reinvent government (Osborne & Gabler, 1993). Reinventing typically involves creative consolidating and group purchasing to reduce runaway costs and development of several services and products that can be offered to create new streams of commercial income. This new breed of entrepreneurial public institution is being called "learning organizations" (Osborne & Gabler, 1993, p. 150). Such institutions are built on a constructive, new paradigm that asks two interrupting questions of every department and division that are rarely heard in conventional public institutions:

- Are we developing and evaluating better ways of doing things, and
- How might this institution potentially profit from solving this problem?

Colleges and especially research universities were created to tackle such pioneering efforts, but have been relatively remiss at the departmental level in confronting these particular questions. This may be due to the fact that most are underfunded to do effective research and development (R & D) work in their chartered areas, despite crippling tuition costs to students and their families. Many state-supported colleges and universities now recognize that they are state aided more so than fully underwritten. It is our understanding that funding at major state institutions from tax dollars has declined to about 17% of what it was a generation ago.

Under the new paradigm, there would be a more systematic effort to develop alternate income streams. With information as the primary mission of colleges and universities, and conspicuous consumers as their primary inhabitants, there surely are intelligent and useful ways to raise and supplement the capital pools needed to operate institutions of higher education with more flourish and less flounder. The college and university commercialization dialogue is intended to carefully and systematically permit this discussion to occur.

There are several surprises for those who might enter this dialogue. For example, contrary to popular impressions, there are few covenants or rules against commercialization. Also, many schools already are engaging in a variety of such activities. Commercialization efforts now range from the traditional continuing education course offerings to the use of college logos on credit cards offered in partnership with VISA and Mastercard. For a growing menu of possible commercialization prospects, see Table 3.

Table 3

Growing Menu of Commercialization Prospects for Colleges and Universities

- Buy and operate a mail and package handling franchise that could contract with the university to handle campus mail and potentially private packaging and mailings for college employees and some local clients.
- Upgrade food services to where it was an attraction to the community and potentially available for weekend rental as an area caterer.
- Offer "900" information lines, from writer "hot lines" to library resource services.
- Open a Bureau of School Services offering assistance with school programming, assessment, teacher evaluations, specialized remediation services, and inservice training.
- Offer more popular conferences, seminars, and courses on site and at desirable travel locations.
- Operate child and elder care businesses using students as well as professionals.
- Open a fee-based full- and part-time help and placement agency using student workers, but not "student activity" fees.
- Operate a travel agency.
- Operate consultation firms in business, engineering, education, etc.
- Encourage all professional schools to offer selected services that could support graduate assistantships.
- Operate, with student help, a telephone service company (answering "800" calls for companies outsourcing their customer relations operations).
- Provide electronic advertising space on campus computing systems and sell time on mainframes during evening hours.

- Package and sell opportunities for insurance companies to market health, auto, and life insurance services to students so that they might benefit from greater coverage and better rates than they now can afford individually.

It could be foolhardy to toss off commercialization possibilities without first joining a fuller dialogue. There are about 8,000 institutions of postsecondary education in the United States that could profit from such discourse. It is no fluke that sports, the only current commercial zone on most campuses, pays its coaches up to $250,000 a year, while the highest paid academic deans and distinguished professors earn less than the average U.S. attorney. While money may present certain new problems, it would help to remedy a greater number. If you are puzzled by such a proposal at a conference on literacy, we must ask "if not us then whom, if not now and here, then when and where?"

Possible Role of the American Reading Forum

Efforts to achieve any of the above are in direct proportion to creating the critical mass of participants necessary to establish and sustain such formative systems' proposals. Thus far no such mass has gathered anywhere on the web in the areas described above.

Our hope is that ARF members, and potentially the organization as a whole, will see fit to join and support some of these nascent efforts and dialogues. Several of these proposals are little more than electronic extensions of ARF's "Call to Forum," and hence consistent with its charter and traditions.

Our best sense is that the recent explosion of information availability and the coming exponential growth of web users will only further add to the need for product–in this case, original ideas, and the careful analyses and open dialogues that might help one to not only ingest, but digest more of what is being served up in such volume.

Should ARF members join and support such efforts, it could help to secure some of the more promising educational uses of the Internet, as well as raising the prominence and income possibilities of respective institutions and of this learned society as a pioneering forum. Homepaging could be one of those rare moments in history, curiously, not seen since homesteading, when speed, innovation, and commitment can compete favorably with size, prestige, and resources.

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The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age

Wayne Otto, Rick Erickson, Ken Smith

Wayne Otto's Proposal

The cover of Barry Sanders's (1994) book *A Is For Ox* carries this chilling subtitle: *The Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age*. And the chill deepens as he develops, quite convincingly, his argument that "the idea of critical, self-directed human being we take for granted as the working foundation of our humanness" is in the process "of deconstructing and falling away entirely from the human repertoire" (p. xi). The fundamental problem, he says, is that the way to orality–the essential foundation for reading and writing, for literacy–has been blocked by electronic machinery. Movies, records, video games, TVs, CDs, and PCs all combine to replace children's verbal interactions with parents and peers, which lie at the heart of orality. The electronic media allow no interruptions; hence, there is no practice with language, no preparation for understanding words and sentences and meanings.

Sanders offers no easy solution to the problems that surround the breakdown in orality. "The solution," he suggests, "can come only if teachers and parents and administrators first hold a vision of what life should look like, and then be willing to work to realize it" (p. 240).

Much as I'd like to see us tackle it, I'm afraid that developing a definitive vision of what life should be like is a far bigger task than we can handle in a Problems Court session. On the other hand, it seems to me that such a session is a legitimate forum for thinking together about

ways in which we reading people–not reading teachers, mind you, but people who read–continue to develop our own personal vision of what life should be like.

No less a personage than Nicholas Negroponte offers what I take to be some words of encouragement for such a pursuit. He gives the following as one of his reasons for offering *Being Digital* (1995) as an old-fashioned book rather than in a digital format:

> Interpretive multimedia leaves very little to the imagination. Like a Hollywood film, multimedia narrative includes such specific representations that less and less is left to the mind's eye. By contrast, the written word sparks images and evokes metaphors that get much of their meaning from the reader's imagination and experiences. When you read a novel, much of the color, sound, and motion comes from you. I think the same kind of personal extension is needed to feel and understand what 'being digital' might mean to your life. (p. 8)

In this brief passage, it seems to me, Negroponte acknowledges not only a major culprit in the ravaging of orality, but also a promising champion to effect its renewal. That champion is us. Reading people. People who read.

Sven Birkerts gives us many insights into one person's notions of what life should be like in *The Gutenberg Elegies* (1994). I particularly like this passage, where he looks to the future, and, like Barry Sanders, he looks for ways to save his self from the ravagement of electronic machines:

> I stare at the textual field on my friend's screen and I am unpersuaded. Indeed, this glimpse of the future–if it is the future–has me clinging all the more tightly to my books, the very idea of them. If I ever took them for granted, I do no longer. I now see each one as a portable enclosure, a place I can repair to release the private, unsocialized, dreaming self. A book is solitude, privacy; it is a way of holding the self apart from the crush of the outer world. (p. 164)

The subtitle of Birkerts's book *The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* is an appropriate title for this Problems Court. In keeping with the theme of the 1996 Annual Conference–Promises, Progress, and Possibilities–the purpose is to provide an opportunity for people who read to examine the evolution of their personal definition of what it means "to read," to reflect on how (or whether) that definition relates to a

personal vision of what life should be like, and to look ahead to how that definition may be affected in the electronic age.

The Problems Court Discussion

About 25 participants, including the presenters, attended the session and presented an array of opinions and experiences about the fate of reading in this electronic age. The papers that follow express some of these personal views and provide a range of viewpoints, insights, and cautions.

Wayne Otto said, "Listen to Vonnegut"

About the time that I began to reflect on what it means to me "to read" and how my personal definition of "to read" has evolved, I came across an interview with Kurt Vonnegut that had been reprinted in *Harper's Magazine* (September, 1996; originally in *Inc. Technology*, November, 1995). Vonnegut had been asked to discuss his feelings about living in an increasingly computerized world. His response, titled "Technology and Me," sums up my thoughts much more eloquently than I could.

> I work at home, and if I wanted to, I could have a computer right by my bed, and I'd never have to leave it. But I use a typewriter, and afterward I mark up the pages with a pencil. Then I call up this woman named Carol out in Woodstock and say, "Are you still doing typing?" Sure she is, and her husband is trying to track bluebirds out there and not having much luck, and so we chitchat back and forth, and I say, "Okay, I'll send you the pages." Then I go down the steps and my wife calls, "Where are you going?" "Well," I say, "I'm going to buy an envelope." And she says, 'You're not a poor man. Why don't you buy a thousand envelopes? They'll deliver them and you can put them in the closet." And I say, "Hush." So I go to this news stand across the street where they sell magazines and lottery tickets and stationery. I have to get in line because there are people buying candy and all that sort of thing, and I talk to them. The woman behind the counter has a jewel between her eyes, and when it's my turn, I ask her if there have been any big winners lately. I get my envelope and seal it up and go to the postal convenience center down the block at the corner of Forty-seventh Street and Second Avenue, where I'm secretly in love with the woman behind the counter. I keep absolutely poker-faced; I never let her know how I feel about her. One time I had my pocket picked in there and got to meet a cop and tell him about it. Anyway, I address the envelope to Carol in Woodstock. I stamp the envelope and mail it in a mailbox in front of the post office, and I go home. And I've

had a hell of a good time. I tell you, we are here on Earth to fart around, and don't let anybody tell you any different.

That pretty much sums up what "to read" has come to mean to me. Now that I'm retired, I no longer feel compelled to spend most of my reading hours perusing professional books and journals. (In retrospect, I'm convinced that all that perusing never did a thing to enhance my grasp of what it means "to read." To the contrary. But that's another story.) After years of compulsive, guilt-driven reading, I'm free at last to fart around. So when *Snow Falling on Cedars* makes me wonder about the Japanese internment during WWII, I find another book and read it. And when a whimsical little book titled *The Death of Napoleon* makes me wonder about Napoleon, I read a bunch of big, serious books about Napoleon. And so on and so forth. And do you know what? I know that if I had caught on a lot sooner about what it really means "to read" I'd have been one whole hell of a lot better reading teacher.

Rick Erickson's To Read Is To Play

Earlier this year I read David Lodge's novel, *Nice Work*. In the story, a manufacturing plant manager's work is viewed through the eyes of a bright and lively female English professor. Likewise, her university work is seen through the eyes of the equally sharp plant manager. The clash created by this arrangement makes the book both funny and illuminating. For example, after a few days on campus the manager, appalled at the university's easy-going work arrangements, confronts the professor with, "Reading at work is a waste of time–it doesn't produce anything." Her quick and intense reply is, "Here, reading is serious work. Work that produces meaning." That phrase was so appealing that I remember saying it over and over to myself for several days. Rolling in it like a pig in cool mud on a hot day . . . reading is work that produces meaning, reading is work that produces . . . , and so on. But later in the year when I read Barry Sanders book *A is for Ox*, I had to change my chant.

Instead of thinking "to read" means "to work," Sanders convincingly tells how "play" is a much better way to think about storytelling, reading, and writing. Sanders describes how pre-literate people realized that language, especially sacred stories told over and over by wise priests, is not to be confused with reality. For example, in Zuni storytelling sessions, clowns called Koyemshi or Mudheads stand at one end of the pueblo parodying with grotesque and exaggerated gestures every word of the priest storyteller who occupies the opposite end. Dressed in costumes, often as women, the Koyemshi make very clear to everyone that information, even the most important information, can always be read in an entirely different way–even in an opposite way. Through these tricksters, nonliterate people make it graphically

clear that language always casts a distorted shadow of itself. Through the Mudheads, a reassuring laugh goes out to warn the entire community: Do not take this stuff so seriously!

Sanders says that today literate cultures have forgotten this ancient wisdom. Instead, we literates rely on language as if every utterance corresponded absolutely with reality. That is, we invest our sentences–spoken or written–with so much importance that we dupe ourselves into mistaking sentences for reality itself.

When I read this I vaguely recalled a scene in Tony Hillerman's book *Sacred Clowns*. I found my copy and sure enough, there it was.

> The Koshare, you know about them, I used to know a Hopi man who was a koshare at Moenkopi. He would say to me: 'compared to what our Creator wanted us to be, all men are clowns. And that's what we koshare do. We act funny to remind the people. To make the people laugh at themselves. We are the sacred clowns,' he said. (p. 164)

When I returned to read *A is for Ox*, I tried to find where I had left off. As I scanned the text, my silent chant of reading is work that produces . . . started up again but stopped when I read:

> The majority of teachers, however, ignore the risible, absolutely playful nature of language. Exactness and precision dominate their approach. Almost everyone demands the same exactness from language as he or she has come to expect from computer programs. (p. 88)

Even though I don't want to, I have to agree with Sanders. We school types tell students that reading and writing are their work. We have invented thousands of teaching strategies to get students to take this "work" seriously, to do it "right." We closely supervise reading and writing watching for miscues and a host of "errors." We have a thousand ways to evaluate, provide feedback, assign grades so that seven degrees below "perfect" is a 93 or a B. In school, we labor under the illusion that through hard work, not play, we can eliminate all but a few stammers, miscues, grammar and spelling mistakes. Our seriousness about reading and writing sends a clear but mistaken message that we must, through hard work, turn the imperfect processes of speech, reading, and writing into precise behaviors.

The illusion that speech, reading, and writing must be "correct" more than 93 out of 100 times is further supported today by the use of personal computers. Sanders says we fool ourselves by believing that

through technology we will "get it right" because PC programs admit no ambiguity and incongruity. We expect to "get it right" because the wonderful machine makes our written work look so perfect. So we believe technology and hard work will enable our students to achieve perfection in literacy.

But both *A is for Ox* and Hillerman's character in *Sacred Clowns* remind us of how language and humans always fall short of being perfect, exact, or right. Sanders reminds us of the need to laugh at ourselves and keep a perspective of playfulness because "the standard of linguistic precision is only an illusion. Ambiguity best characterizes the nature of language" (p. 89).

As I think about all of this it occurs to me that as a life-long-school-type-book-lover, it is only natural I coveted the words of Lodge's professor and chanted over and over, reading is work that produces meaning. But now, as I see what is happening in our schools and our culture, I'm convinced we have become far too serious about reading and writing. So I've decided to put on a mask and a clown suit. I think it's time to begin to listen to some clowns in our own pueblos. Here is what happens when you think like a Mudhead clown.

In September this year, I read an editorial by Mortimer Zuckerman, editor-in-chief, *U. S. News & World Report*, entitled "Why Schools Need Standards." Zuckerman wrote that 78% of the public favors standards for students in K-3 and by a 2-1 margin they want to require students to pass standardized national examinations for promotion from grade to grade. Zuckerman said a reason for student lackluster performance is the lack of national standards. He said everyone knows science, two plus two, and grammar is the same in Oregon, Florida, Detroit, San Diego. He called for higher standards to induce performance-based innovation in schools and performance-based assessment of teachers and administrators. He ended his pitch with the warning that if we don't do this now, before we are inundated with millions of new students, we will suffer further decline in the school system and fall further behind a competitive world. If we don't get it right he warns, we are doomed.

As I finished his editorial, I imagined Zuckerman wanting us to chant, standards will work to induce excellence, standards will work to . . . and I daydreamed the following scene. We are in a cool, dimly lit pueblo. At one end, editor-in-chief Zuckerman is telling his story "Why Schools Need Standards." At the other end of the room a Zuni Mudhead and a Hopi koshare are heckling Zuckerman. They hoot and dance to remind us, the audience, that standards and testing are merely

language–they are not precise and they do not truly reflect or represent reality. The clowns poke fun at Zuckerman to remind us not to take his language, his story, his warning, so seriously. The clowns tell us that he is confused. Standards, testing, surveillance, and competitive testing where our children outperform others–are not reality. He is confusing the language of tests and standards for reality and is concluding that teachers are unprepared, schools are in decline, and the country is falling behind in a competitive world. As Zuckerman tells his story, he is interrupted as the Mudhead and the koshare dance and sing an off-beat, out-of-tune laughing chant that sounds like, "reading is play that implies meaning, reading is play that implies meaning." When one clown kneels to write in the sand floor the other one joyfully kicks the symbols into dust to show how writing is frail, temporary.

Caught in the middle, we in the audience are left alone when Zuckerman and the clowns stop. I walk out of the pueblo and as I squint in the bright sunlight I almost bump into one of the clowns, a Zuni Mudhead who is taking off her mask. I ask her, "Do you think we take standards, testing, competition too seriously?" She doesn't look me in the eyes, she busies herself packing up her mask and costume and quietly asks, "Do I think it is vain, naive, stupid to believe that language standards and tests can force teachers to make our children smarter–smarter than children in other countries? No, speaking as a clown, I think it's funny," and she turns and strides away, laughing to herself.

Suddenly my daydream was interrupted by the bong and the "You have new mail" window on my PC screen. I sat up, clicked on the window, checked my e-mail, and saw a message from Harry at American University in Cairo, Egypt. It's a silly piece called Hunting an Elephant. I chuckled when I read, 'Lawyers don't hunt elephants, they follow herds around arguing about who owns the droppings." Deciding to print a copy to share with my lawyer friend, Tom, I stood at the printer waiting, thinking about reading and writing as play. Then I remember other "fun"e-mail. With Harry's hard copy in hand I return to my PC, look at my mail box, and scroll through four months of 204 messages to see that since July 1996, there are 37 or 18% fun and joke messages from guess who–Gus, Harry, Norm, Wayne. The rest I classify as either one-way (112 or 55%) or two-way (55 or 27%) messages.

I'm pleased that almost 20% of my e-mail consists of clowning around on the Internet. It looks like my rough e-mail tally lends some support for the ancients' practice of keeping a playful or "fun" flavor to reading and writing. Even professor types using the latest communication technology can't help but "play" on e-mail. If the clowns are right

the chances are about 1:5 that my next e-mail will be a funny "playful" message.

As I consider all of this I confess it still feels right to chant, reading and writing is work that produces meaning. But I also must confess that I had a lot of fun writing this, and I'm having a lot of fun "playing" as I tell this story. I'm convinced that "to read" and "to write" and "to speak," must always have a flavor of "to play." Today, more than ever before, we need wise clowns to warn us not to take reading and writing, especially language testing and standards, so seriously.

This warning is especially important today. The speed and ease of electronic language is marvelous, but we must not be tricked into thinking that hard work plus technology will automatically lead to perfection in writing and reading. The clown at the other end of the pueblo is there to remind us that we'll never eliminate the natural inexactness of human speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

Ken Smith's Literacy and Wisdom in Cyberspace

While eating some breakfast in the Atlanta airport before catching the last leg of my flight to the American Reading Forum last December, I overheard two young, well-dressed business men talking. The conversation involved keeping current on stock market listings and went something like this:

> "As soon as I get to work, I bring them up on the computer. They're current, organized, and easy to use. I can print out what I need. It's great!" said one while sipping his coffee.
>
> "You know, I'm not so comfortable with that," replied the other. "I'm in the habit of sitting at my table at home, having some coffee and reading the listings each morning in the paper. There's something about seeing them there in print, that . . . well, I just seem to trust it more. I've been reading the paper since I was a kid, and I guess it just feels right."

This conversation certainly seemed to foreshadow our discussion of "The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age" prompted by the writings of Birkerts (1994), Negroponte (1995), and Sanders (1994).

The increasing use and extraordinary role of technology is causing us, both in our personal and professional lives to make dramatic changes and deal introspectively with emotions, interactions with others, ways of organizing our intellectual base for "prior knowledge," ways of learning and factoring knowledge in useful and productive

ways, and especially how we develop competence in our use of literacy. In short, I agree with Birkerts (1995, p. 228) when he states:

> My core fear is that we are, as a culture, as a species, becoming shallower; that we have turned from depth–from the Judeo-Christian premise of unfathomable mystery–and are adapting ourselves to the ersatz security of a vast lateral connectedness. That we are giving up on wisdom, the struggle for which has for millennia been central to the very idea of culture, and that we are pledging instead to a faith in the web. What *is* our idea, our ideal, of wisdom these days? Who represents it? Who even evokes it? Our postmodern culture is a vast fabric of competing isms; we are leaderless and subject to terror, masked as the freedoms, of an absolute relativism. It would be wrong to lay all the blame at the feet of technology, but more wrong to ignore the great transformative impact of the new technological systems–to act as if it's all just business as usual.

An example of Birkerts' concern of the lack of deep reading over time and need for wisdom came to mind as I ran across the following in a high school literature textbook preface used by my father (Cross, Smith, & Stauffer, 1931, p. iii):

> The editors, furthermore, have constantly kept in mind the fascination of reading–the presentation of literature not as a task, or as an analysis, but as a delight, as an invitation into the best, the happiest, and the wisest moments of the best, happiest, and wisest of men . . . . Emotional enjoyment is conditioned on intellectual insight; or, to put it more simply, in order to appreciate, one must first understand.

What bothered me about Birkerts' (1994) writing was his apparent premise that everyone does or should have the same, and obviously his, intense, unique belief and value system about the primary role reading plays in shaping one's life. Most of his examples seemed to focus on the role of reading fiction, a novel, a "really good book" and the intellectual activity, intensely held emotions, introspection, and satisfaction that one gets, and uses, in his or her personal and intellectual life from the process. In what might be called one person's love affair with reading itself, he appeared to present a view that represented the literati or intelligentsia. It might follow that all our free time, our personal development and all that we are should come primarily from intense involvement in reading books to the exclusion of most other factors. With this last point, I disagree. Yet, as a reading teacher educator for over 25 years, I agree fully with the primary importance of developing

excitement about effective use of literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking) as well as critical thinking/problem-solving in our lives. I agree with the importance of imparting this love of reading and learning in all areas and aspects of literature to students of all ages. The balance among recreational reading, reading for information, reading for work, assigned school reading, reading to solve problems, using reading as a base for new learning in all content areas, finding and exploring written and visual information about all manner of topics and contents–all these should be left to the individual learner and not be totally controlled by some outside person's belief system. I suggest that all of these types and purposes of reading, and writing for that matter, as well as related study skills, can be found and learned with books in hand and expanded through computer exploration of the evolving Internet/www and other multimedia resources.

Certainly, there is useful information for all students on the Internet. For those following our debate regarding Birkerts' writing, one might follow Stephenson's (1995-96) on-line response to *The Gutenberg Elegies*, and Birkerts' (1996) response to Stephenson. Another interesting link to schools using cyberspace as part of their curriculum is McKenzie's (1996) "The post modem school in the new information landscape," found in the on-line journal *From Now On*. Tolva's (1995) on-line article "The heresy of hypertext: Fear and anxiety in the late age of print" contributes another interesting response to Birkerts.

Finally, the most important use of cyberspace for students is the interactivity they have with others. This may include working together with expert mentors on projects, sharing information they have found, sharing their writing with someone, talking about all manner of things related to their interests, whether they are in the same class or school, or another district, state, or country. My students at Eastern this year continued their on-line discussions with students at many other universities who were also taking secondary/content reading classes and continued to be actively involved in considerable cyberspace searching (Otto et al., 1996). This year, 38 pairs of students were matched with pairs of teachers from around the state of Oregon to work through a series of assignments designed to make them familiar with the Internet, use of the www resources including search engines and browsers, and work together through e-mail to meet common goals. Their beginning literacy related to the use of computers, the Internet, and cyberspace educational activities increased dramatically.

Museum visits, space walks, every word written by Shakespeare, art from major galleries, pictures and writing from the Civil War, The Oregon Trail, the holocaust, works from the Middle Ages, books,

poems, book reviews, plays, music, newspapers, current network news, weather, lesson plans, teacher listservers/chat groups, professional organizations, links to mentors and experts, libraries, research articles, journals–it's all out there in cyberspace. Some of it is "junk" while there are some diamonds; some is reliable while some is not. It is not a panacea for society's ills or all the problems we face as "reading people" or as reading teacher educators, but it is a useful tool if we apply some needed historic wisdom along with our knowledge of what literacy and the love of reading is all about.

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Reaction to "The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age"

Eunice N. Askov

The Problems Court panel members argued effectively that electronic media have blocked the development of orality which is the foundation of literacy. Electronic media, primarily television, has interfered with verbal interactions between parents and children; children have not practiced language in the way that earlier generations did. Sanders (1994) makes this argument; the panel members agreed, leaning most heavily on his arguments during the discussion.

Panel members discussed the need for a radical change in society to overcome the influence of the electronic media. The panel argued: "That champion (of reading books) is us. Reading people. People who read" (Otto, 1997).

Erickson (1997) agreed with Sanders in stressing that reading ought to be fun–that we take reading and language too seriously. Instead, the mantra that pervades the schools is "Reading is work that produces meaning." Teachers (and teacher educators), in our striving for correctness in reading and writing, ignore the play of language, making literacy development a tedious task for children. Erickson sees the standards movement as fostering the mantra of reading as work and actually working counter productively against good reading instruction and lifetime reading habits.

Smith (1997) followed up by describing Birkerts' *Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (1994) as "one person's love affair with reading." The problem, according to Smith, is that other people are

not living in that world. He pointed out the various purposes for reading, especially reading for information, and that the computer is an important tool for accessing information. In fact, he argued that the computer becomes important to those who do not live in the world of books–that they can develop literacy skills through electronic media rather than through books.

Hayes (1997) countered that, with electronic media, "one can wade out further but can't swim as deep." The Internet provides meaningful reading, but not indepth experiences with literacy. He stressed that children must see themselves individually as readers. Unfortunately, mass media markets everything except reading and discourages children from seeing themselves as readers.

Randlett (1997) identified 1950 as the watershed between generations in terms of attitudes toward reading. She pointed out, in response to Smith, that technology is not neutral–that the trend has been toward less reading with more dependence on electronic media. She blamed ourselves (reading teachers) as being complicit in giving in to technology (e.g., television, reading machines) and in fragmenting reading into discrete skills.

The discussion that followed became nostalgic at times for the "good old days" of radio (another of the electronic media) when listeners, like readers, had to use their imaginations to visualize the characters and action. Sanders, (1994) participants agreed, had no real solutions to the dilemma; his suggestion that women should stay home to breast feed their children was not well received. Likewise, the other authors also offered no solutions to declining book readership.

Smith, (1997) on the other hand, continued to point out the greater interactivity for users of the Internet. He stressed that it encourages nonlinear thinking which is positive. However, one can also access linear text, such as *Sherlock Holmes*, electronically (which most people would download and print for convenience to read as a book).

While the tenor of the discussion (with the exception of Smith) was generally negative toward electronic media, it appears that we, in the 1990s, are in the midst of a paradigm shift. Turkle (1995) uses the phrase invented by anthropologist Victor Turner (1966) to label this shift a "liminal moment." Turner envisioned a liminal moment as a temporary transition, but Turkle believes it is our new permanent reality. She describes liminal moments as "...times of tension, extreme reactions, and great opportunity (when) ...we are simultaneously flooded with predictions of doom and predictions of immiment utopia" (p. 268).

In this liminal moment, we need to take the best of the past into the future of reading instruction. Technology and books are not incompatible. For example, you can e-mail the National Public Radio's *Car Talk* web page and list your favorite book with an explanation of why you like it. Furthermore, the single largest sales item on the Internet is books!

We can use technology, especially the Internet, to teach and encourage thinking and problem-solving skills. Children, in searching the Internet, can experience nonlinear as well as linear thinking and literacy development. Alvarez (1996) describes this opportunity as it can happen in classroom instruction: No longer is the textbook the single resource for high school students. Students are now able to access the Internet through multiple pathways of inquiry. Most textbooks present information in a linear format, while the Internet allows students to access information from multiple perspectives in a nonlinear format (p. 18).

Perhaps Clinton's *America Reads* program is an attempt to do what the panel called for–marketing reading to children at the early stages of reading development. Since the President is calling for college tutors, this is a marvelous opportunity for teacher educators as well as teachers to jump in and provide conceptual leadership to this program. My hope is that the Problems Court discussion inspired some participants to get involved.

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The American Reading forum declares the following to be its reason for existence and the guidelines for its activities:

- To provide a true forum for reading education where new research can be generated, research in progress can be refined, completed research can be reported, and reported research can be evaluated.
- To provide for the translation of reading research, theory, and philosophical deliberations into sound practice, but with no research, discussion, or contemplation to be discarded because its implementation is not immediately apparent.
- To conduct a conference at which newly trained scholars and scholars in training can get to know and get assistance from established and distinguished scholars in the field, through a mutual exchange of ideas.
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To achieve its goals, ARF sponsors a meeting each year during early December. The program consists of the common conference session formats (e.g., paper sessions, major addresses, and symposia), as well as alternative formats to those generally employed by organizations in the field of reading. To enhance the opportunity for participants' interaction, the American Reading Forum encourages a variety of formats for its sessions. A "Topical Issues Forum," a "Continuous Dialogue Session," and "Mentorships Sessions" are a few of the formats that ARF considers as ways to allow issues and topics to be discussed in depth by those who attend the annual meeting.

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